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THE ILIAD OF HOMER

VOLUME TWO



# THE ILIAD OF HOMER

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH HEXAMETER

VERSE BY

PRENTISS CUMMINGS

AN ABRIDGMENT

WHICH INCLUDES ALL THE MAIN STORY AND THE  
MOST CELEBRATED PASSAGES

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME TWO

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C O N T E N T S

VOLUME TWO

	PAGE
BOOK XII . . . . .	253
BOOK XVI . . . . .	282
BOOK XVII . . . . .	314
BOOK XVIII . . . . .	343
BOOK XIX . . . . .	381
BOOK XXII . . . . .	398
BOOK XXIII . . . . .	433
BOOK XXIV . . . . .	445
ZEUS, HERA, AND POSEIDON . . . . .	499



# HOMER'S ILIAD

## BOOK XII<sup>1</sup>

THUS, in camp, the son of Menoitios, mighty Patroklos,  
Tended Eurypylos wounded; outside, the Argives  
and Trojans  
Fought in tumultuous fight; nor long was the moat,  
nor the rampart,  
Built to protect the Danaan ships with the ditch  
run about it,  
Fated to last; for hecatombs none had they burned  
the immortals,  
Winning their aid for defence of the camp with its  
manifold booty.  
Saving the gods build the wall they labor vainly that  
build it.  
Only while Hector was living, and wrath in Achilles  
persisted,  
Only while still undestroyed was the opulent city  
of Priam,

<sup>1</sup> The discouragement expressed by the Argives at the end of the preceding book is hardly justified by the facts. This book which brings the ships into danger is therefore important to the story, since it affords adequate reason why Achilles should relent in part, as he did.

That long endured, and only that long, the wall of  
the Argives.

Nay, when the flower of the Trojans were dead, and  
many Achaians, —

Even of them but a remnant was left. — and the  
city of Priam

Fell after ten years' siege, and the Argives sailed for  
their homesteads,

Right then, planning to wash it away, Poseidon and  
Phoibos

Turned proud rivers against it; and Phoibos Apollo  
united

All that flow seaward from Ida; and nine days' time  
on the ramparts

Dashed he the power of the current; and Zeus, in  
order to aid them,

Rained without ceasing; and, trident in hand, earth-  
shaking Poseidon

Taking the lead, thrust into the streams the mighty  
foundations

Builted of beams and of rocks, there laid by the toil-  
ing Achaians,

Leaving the vast shore smooth as of old by the  
Hellespont-eddies.

When he had covered the beach with its wonted sand-  
heaps, the rivers

Turned he to flow once more where the fair streams  
wandered aforetime.



This for an after day, but now the battle and war-  
din

Blazed round a firm-built wall, with rattle incessant  
of missiles

Beating the beams of the towers; and behind them  
cowered the Argives,

Smit by the lash of Zeus and fear of man-slaying  
Hector.

Otherwise he — he fought as aforetime with might of  
a tempest;

Even as when, amid huntsmen and dogs, a boar or a  
lion

Wheelet, exulting in might, as the men stand hud-  
dled together

Facing and hurling their spears; but his haughty  
heart feareth nothing,

Taketh no thought of flight, and death only quelleth  
his courage;

Often he turneth and maketh assault on the lines of  
the huntsmen,

And, wherever his onset is made, men scatter before  
him;

So, to and fro dashed Hector to spots where com-  
rades were gathered,

Bidding them march through the moat. Not even  
the swift-footed horses

Dared it, but stopped at the uttermost edge, and  
stood there and snorted,

Scared by its width — and leap it they could not,  
go through it they would not,  
Seeing along it on *both* sides the banks overhung; and  
above them  
Planted were sharpened stakes, there placed by the  
Danaan soldiers,  
Close together and huge, 'gainst hostile onset a  
bulwark.  
Into this ditch 't were not easy for horses, a chariot  
drawing,  
Safely to enter; the footmen, for all that, were  
minded to try it.  
Right then Polydamas stopped, and said to impetu-  
ous Hector: —

“Hector and others, ye leaders of Troy and of men in  
alliance,  
Very unwise is our thought to drive through the  
trench with our horses;  
Hard, right hard is the moat to be crossed, for pali-  
sades sharpened  
Stand in it thick, and beyond them ariseth the wall  
of the Argives.  
There it is nowise fit to go down and battle with  
horses,  
Being so cramped, and it strikes me a treacherous  
spot to be caught in.

True, if high-thundering Zeus, being bent on aiding  
the Trojans,  
Meaneth the Danaans ill and to bring them to utter  
extinction,  
Surely *no* man could wish more than I, and the  
sooner the better,  
Even their names might die afar from horse-nour-  
ishing Argos.  
But — should they drive us back, and we in stam-  
pede from the shipping,  
Tumble into this ditch, and the Danaans flank us, I  
fear me  
Messenger even would never get home to tell our  
destruction.  
Comrades, do as I say: let the squires stay here with  
the horses;  
We then on foot in a heavy-armed mass will all follow  
Hector,  
Sure that the foe will give back if, indeed, in the  
toils of destruction.”

Thus Polydamas spake, and his wise word Hector  
accepting  
Straightway out from the car sprang down to the  
ground in his armor;  
Nor did the rest of the Trojans remain in their  
chariots longer,

Nay, every man sprang out when he saw the example of Hector.

Each, then, ordered his driver to stay back, holding his horses

Orderly there by the trench; and they, dividing and arming,

Gathered in five strong bands, and followed their several leaders.

Hector's troop was the first, with Polydamas matchless to aid him,

Greatest in number and boldest to act, and also most eager

Breach to make in the wall and fight in the Argive encampment.

With them Kebríones went, third leader; behind with the horses

One less able to fight than Kebríones Hector had left there.

Over the second was Paris, Alkathoös, also Agenor; Helenos captained the third, and stately Deïphobus aided,

Both being children of Priam; third aid was Asios mighty,

Asios, Hyrtakos' son, whose tall sorrel horses had brought him

Hither to Troy from Arisbè, a town on the river Selléis.

Over the fourth was a leader bold, the son of Anchises,

Even Aineias, whose aids were two, the sons of Antenor,

Akmas, Archelochus strong, and both efficient in warfare.

Over the fifth, the far-famed allies, Sarpedon was leader,

Having Glaukos as aid and warlike Aísteropaíos, Clearly his best next after himself: but he was unequalled.

All five, when they had fitted each other with bucklers of bull's-hide,

Marched on the Danaans straight, and without any fears of the issue,

Deeming that they would give way, and fall straight back on the shipping.

Now all the rest of the Trojans and famed allies, one excepted,

Followed the prudent advice of Polydamas, mighty in counsel,

All save Asios, Hyrtakos' son, who objected to leaving

Horses and charioteer, but with them advanced on the shipping;

Fool, for back from the ships to wind-swept Ilios never,



Never was he on chariot borne to return with his  
horses —

Fate too soon overtook him, the fate men shrink at  
the name of,

Under the spear of Deukalion's son, Idoméneus  
princely.

Asios led the assault on the left of the ships, where  
the Argives

Drove to camp from the field with horses and chari-  
ots daily;

At it he drave with horses and car, and the doors of  
the gateway

Found he unshut, and the long bar down; men were  
holding them open

Haply comrades to save who were straggling back  
from the battle.

Straight, and with mind alert, he guided his horses  
right forward,

Followers shouting amain; for they thought the  
Achaïans before them

Longer would not hold out, but beat a retreat on the  
shipping, —

Fools, two men most valiant in fight they found in  
the gateway,

Men of the Lapithai strain, both spearmen stout and  
courageous;

Son of ancient Peirithoös one of them, strong Poly-  
poites,

One Leoníteus, mighty as Ares, the hated of mortals.

Both in front of the ponderous gates stood steadfast as oak-trees,

High-crested chiefs of the mountains, which bide the winds and the rain-storms

Ever, their great strong roots unbroken and framed in the greensward;

So these twain in their stout right arms confiding, and steadfast,

Faced great Asios driving against them and feared not and fled not.

Straight 'gainst the well-built wall the Trojans marched, and their sounding

Targes lifted on high as they came with tumultuous shouting.

Inside the gates the twain were bidding the mail-clad Achaians

Stay and defend the ships; but seeing the wall was in danger,

Trojans rushing against it and Danaans shouting and fleeing,

Forth from the gates they dashed, and fought in front of the gateway

Fiercely as two wild boars which to men and dogs in the mountains,

Coming a noisy throng, give warm reception and, charging

This way and that, they shatter about them the  
trees of the forest,  
Tearing them out by the roots, and, while life lasteth  
within them,  
Gnashing of tusks ceaseth not; so, loud on the breasts  
of the warriors  
Rattled the bronze missile-hit, for a mighty fight  
they were waging,  
Trusting their might and their friends up above,  
who down from the towers  
Hurled huge stones in defence of themselves, their  
camp, and their shipping.  
Thick as the snow-flakes fall to the earth when  
boisterous storm-winds,  
Shaking the louring clouds, sweep down on the fields  
of the farmer,  
So from their hands flew missiles alike from Achaian  
and Trojan,  
So on helmet and shield fell huge stones, crashing and  
grinding.  
Then, confounded, in wrath unforgetting, spake  
Asios, saying: —

“Verily, All-father Zeus, thou, too, art an absolute  
liar,  
Grown such; for surely, I said in my heart, the  
Danaan heroes



---

Never will stand their ground 'gainst might and  
courage like ours;  
Yet, as an army of wriggling wasps, or bees by a  
roadside,  
Leave not their hollow home but, fierce in defence  
of their children,  
Stay and fight with the hunter; so these, tho' two  
against many,  
Think not of leaving the gates, and of living and  
dying they reckon not."

Thus he said; but his outcry the plan of Zeus did not  
alter,  
Seeing the glory of taking the wall he intended for  
Hector.

While thus defending the gate they were stripping the  
arms from the fallen,  
Still the band led by Hector with wise Polydamas  
aiding —  
Band the largest and boldest in fight, as well as most  
eager  
Both to break thro' the wall, and burn the Danaan  
shipping —  
Lingered aback by the trench; for, just as they  
started to cross it,  
Lo, a bird flew over their heads — a warning of  
evil —

Even a high-soaring eagle which skirted the left of  
the army,  
Bearing a snake, a blood-red snake, in its talons —  
a monster,  
Living and struggling still, and the joy of battle forgot  
not;  
Nay, for backward it writhed and bit the breast of  
the eagle  
Close by the neck; unnerved by the pain its captor  
then dropped it  
Down to the earth; as it fell in the midst where the  
soldiers were gathered,  
Off with a scream flew the bird, to the blasts of the  
winds a companion.  
Full of concern were the Trojans on seeing the slip-  
pery serpent  
Lying amid them, a portent of Zeus who wieldeth  
the aegis.  
Straightway Polydamas halted, and said to impet-  
uous Hector: —

“Hector, thou takest it ill if ever I speak in as-  
sembly,  
E'en tho' my counsel be good, and plain speech  
faithfully spoken  
Thinkest exceedeth a plain man's right, nor brook it  
in council,

Still less brook it in war — save it feedeth thy masterful spirit;

Yet, once more will I say what the time and duty demandeth.

Let us not go on our raid to destroy the Danaan shipping:

Ill will it prove in the end, I am sure, for just as we started

Came this bird, which is clearly a portent of ill to the Trojans,

Even a high-soaring eagle which skirted the left of the army,

Bearing a blood-red snake in its claws, a monster still living,

Yet it abandoned its prey or ever it came to its eyrie,

Neither accomplished its end of making it food for its nestlings.

Even so we, tho' we carry by storm their gates and defences,

Even tho', worsted, the Argives should beat a retreat to the shipping,

Yet will our homeward march be wild retreat and disorder;

Many a Trojan, I ween, shall we leave behind us — the fallen —

Slain by the Danaan spear in stubborn defence of their barracks.

Thus would any true soothsayer say who knoweth  
his business,  
Hath true knowledge of signs, and winneth faith from  
the people."

Grim was his look as for answer outspake great  
crest-waving Hector: —

"Truly, this that thou sayest, Polydamas, pleaseth  
me little.

Thou hast the wit to harangue on the opposite  
side and the better.

Granting this counsel of thine be in downright ear-  
nestness spoken,

Surely the gods themselves have blasted thy natural  
genius,

Thou who bid'st us forget high-thundering Zeus and  
his counsel,

All he hath promised to me and by nod of his head  
hath confirmed it.

Long-winged birds are the sages thou biddest us  
look to for guidance —

Things I heed not, nor care for them either, however  
they wander,

Whether they go to the right toward the east and the  
sun as he riseth,

Or, if it hap, sail away to the left and the westering  
darkness.

We give obedience due to mighty Zeus and his  
counsel,  
Him who reigneth o'er all, over mortals and also  
immortals.  
That one omen is best which biddeth us fight for  
our country."

Suiting action to word he led the way, and his soldiers  
Followed with wondrous shouts; and Zeus, great  
lord of the thunder,  
Sent from the mountains of Ida a wild tornado to  
aid them,  
Driving the dust straight down on the ships, and the  
Danaans' spirit  
Wheedled away, while victory marched with the  
Trojans and Hector.  
Full of self-confidence they, on their might and his  
omens reliant,  
Made unceasing assault on the mighty wall of the  
Argives.  
Beams of the towers they kept dragging away, the  
battlements shattered,  
And, on the posts in front of the wall, they pried with  
persistence,  
Posts the Achaians had driven to serve as a stay of  
the earth-works.  
These they kept pulling down, and to storm the  
Danaan ramparts



Hoped without ceasing; but even in this strait the  
Danaans flinched not,  
No, but with bull's-hide shields having closed the  
battlements missing,  
Cast down missiles in showers on the foe coming  
under the rampart.

Everywhere over the wall the Aiases ran without  
ceasing,  
Constantly giving commands, and rousing the might  
of the Argives,  
One man by hearty approval, another sternly rebuk-  
ing,  
Never mincing their words if a man kept aloof from  
the fighting —  
Saying: "Ye Argive chiefs and other subordinate  
rulers,  
Yea, and men in the ranks less valiant, (for nowise  
are all men  
Equal in war,) there is work enough here for all of  
your powers.  
This every man of you knows without telling: there-  
fore let no man,  
Turning his back at the shout of the foe, give ground  
toward the shipping;  
No, forge well to the front yourselves, and encourage  
the others,

Hoping that haply Olympian Zeus, the god of the  
lightning,  
Grant us to ward the attack, and drive the foe to  
the city."

Thus, with rallying cry, both urged the Achaians to  
battle.

Then, o'er the warring men flew stones as thickly  
as snow-flakes

Fall on a Winter's day, when Zeus, who guideth the  
seasons,

Starteth a snow-storm, to man displaying the mis-  
siles of heaven;

So, with the winds all laid, he maketh continuous  
down-pour,

Snoweth till covered are hill-tops high, and tower-  
ing foreland,

Covered the flowery plain and the fertile field of the  
farmer,

Aye, till the grey sea's havens are white, and even the  
sea-beach

Saving as swept by the breakers; and all the rest of  
the landscape

Lieth enswathed in its wrappings of down, when the  
snow-fall is heavy;

Such was the volley of stones, alike from besieged and  
besieger,

Some being at Trojans cast. some from Trojans cast  
at Achaians,  
And, the wall all along, reëchoed the thunder of battle.

Nowise, at least not then, would the Trojans and  
glorious Hector  
Ever have broken the gates of the wall, or the ponderous cross-bar,  
Save that his son, Sarpedon, dread Zeus who governeth all things  
Sent on the Danaan host like a lion on crumpled-horned cattle.  
Straightway he lifted before him his full-orbed shield, which the bronze-smith  
Hammered in beautiful bronze-work, and, inside, many a bull's-hide  
Stitched to the radiate framework of gold that completed the circle.  
This he lifted before him, and two spears brandished, and forward  
Rushed with the headlong rush of a lion that lairs in the mountains  
Long anhungered for meat, and his reckless spirit impelleth  
Dauntless attack on a well-fenced fold for the sheep shut within it.  
Nothing he careth for dogs, nor men with spears that defend it,



Never thinketh of beating retreat the assault un-  
attempted,  
No, but with desperate bound he seizeth his prey, or  
is smitten  
Dead, while forcing the fight, by a dart from the hand  
of a marksman;  
Even so then his impetuous heart bade godlike  
Sarpedon  
March on the wall and its battlements rend, and  
storm it in triumph.  
Straightway to Glaukos he spake, the son of Hip-  
polochos, saying: —

“Glaukos, why in our land hold we the chiefest of  
honors,  
Seats of honor, and meats, and wines in generous  
wine-cups?  
Wherefore to us granted noble demesnes on the  
banks of the Xanthos,  
Beautiful orchards and vineyards, and many a wheat-  
bearing acre?  
Now in return it behooves us to stand in the forefront  
of danger,  
Even the Lykian van, and the fight face where it is  
hottest,  
So that our followers bold, beholding, may say, and  
with meaning: —  
‘Not inglorious, surely, are these our Lykian masters:

True, they are kings, and eat fat sheep, and their  
wines are the choicest —  
Yes, but they fight in the front, and their valor is  
great as their station.'  
Comrade, I tell thee true, if, this one battle escap-  
ing,  
Death did not face us still, and age and decrepitude  
face us,  
Neither would I myself go forth to fight with the  
foremost,  
No, nor urge thee on to man-ennobling battle.  
But, as it is, (for the minions of death are lurking all  
round us,  
Myriad, such that no mortal can shun, much less can  
escape them,)  
On to the front, be it victory won, or a warrior's  
death-bed!"

Thus spake Sarpedon, and Glaukos complied, and,  
turning beside him  
Both marched straight on the foe with the Lykians  
pressing behind them.  
Watching the movement Menestheus, the son of  
Peteös, trembled,  
Seeing his tower was the station they drave at, threat-  
ening ruin.  
Anxiously scanned he the parapet over to see if an  
Argive

Leader was there, to ward from his comrades the  
danger impending;

On it he noticed the Aiases twain, insatiate warriors,  
Standing alert, and Teucer, just come from the  
station, was nigh them.

Call as he might he could never be heard, so great  
was the uproar —

War-cries rising to heaven, and smiting of shields  
and of helmets

Crested, and pounding the gates; for all were now  
shut, and the Trojans

Standing anigh were mightily seeking to break them  
and enter.

Hastily, now, to Aias he sent the herald, Thoötes,<sup>1</sup>  
Saying: — “Go on the run and summon Aias,  
Thoötes.

Bring them both if thou canst, for here disaster is  
threatened,

Seeing right hither are pressing the Lykians, men who  
aforetime

Press persistently on, and they charge with infuriate  
ardor.

If, over there as well, is heavy fighting and danger,  
Yet, without fail, tho’ alone, let stout Telamonian  
Aias

Come to the rescue, and Teucer come with him, the  
archer unerring.”

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced Tho ó tes.

Thus he said, and the herald heard, and, straight-  
way complying,  
Hurried away on the run to the wall of the mail-clad  
Achaïans,  
Halted beside the Aiases twain, and instantly  
shouted: —  
“Ho, there, Aiases both, ye chiefs of the mail-clad  
Achaïans,  
King Menestheus is urgent that you come over where  
he is,  
Wishing your aid in the struggle, albeit your stay be  
the shortest —  
Both if you possibly can — for there disaster is  
threatened,  
Seeing a heavy attack the Lykian chieftains are  
leading,  
Men who aforetime have ever pressed on in des-  
perate battle.  
If, here also, is heavy assault, and fight is beginning,  
Then he desireth at least that stout Telamonian  
Aias  
Come tho’ alone, and Teucer come with him, the bow-  
man unerring.”

Thus he said, and, complying, spake great Telamonian  
Aias  
Straightway in wingèd words to his namesake, son of  
Oïleus: —

“Aias, do you twain here, both you and strong  
Lycomédes,  
Stand your ground, and the Danaans urge to fight to  
the utmost.  
I must comply, and go over yonder, and help in the  
struggle;  
Then will I hurry straight back as soon as the danger  
is over.”

Suiting action to word, away Telamonian Aias  
Went, and Teucer went with him, a son of Telamon  
also.  
When they had come to the tower of great-souled  
Menestheus, and entered,  
Sorely beset they found them, and over the battle-  
ments climbing  
Fierce as a gruesome tornado the Lykian leaders and  
princes.  
Then, in fight, the combatants grappled, shouting  
their war-cries.

First to despatch his man was great Telamonian Aias,  
Slaying the comrade of mighty Sarpedon, great-  
souled Epikles,  
Smiting him down with a jagged stone, by the battle-  
ments lying,  
Aye, and a huge one. No man in his prime with both  
hands could lift it,



Such as are men of to-day; but Aias lifted and cast it,  
Brake in the fourfold crest, and smashed his head to  
a jelly.

Down like a diver he dropped from the lofty tower,  
and the spirit

Left him; and Teucer, down from the wall let fly,  
and his arrow

Glaukos hit in the shoulder who bared it, fronting the  
battle,

Making him cease from the fight; and back he sprang  
from the rampart,

Slyly, that none of the foe might see he was hit and  
revile him.

Soon as he knew it, Sarpedon was grieved at the loss  
of his comrade,

Yet his joy in the fight he forgot not, but making a  
spear-cast

Hit Alkmaön,<sup>1</sup> begotten of Thestor. Withdrawing  
his weapon

Headlong Alkmaön fell down, and his bronze arms  
rattled about him.

Then, with his mighty hands Sarpedon, the parapet  
seizing,

Gave it a pull, and the mass gave way completely,  
above it

Leaving the rampart bare and a roadway opened for  
many.

<sup>1</sup> Alk má on.

Aias and Teucer then faced him together. The  
shaft of the latter

Spent its force on the shield-strap that gleamed on  
the breast of the hero —

Zeus preserved him from death that he might not  
fall by the shipping.

Aias sprang on with a cast at his shield, but through  
it the spear-point

Passed not, but force of the blow made him stagger,  
and halt in his onrush.

Back he withdrew just a step from the parapet; yet  
did he nowise

Beat a retreat, for his soul was aflame, and victory  
hoped for.

Wheeling about he called to the stalwart Lykians,  
saying: —

“Lykians, why so remiss! why slack in the fury of  
onslaught!

Hard is the task for me, however stoutly I struggle,  
All alone to break through and force a way to the  
shipping.

Up, then, and at them! the greater our number the  
better the finish.”

Thus he said, and his men, abashed at reproof from  
their captain,

Rushed still more to support him, and pressed on  
harder than ever.

---

Over against them the Argives together massed their  
battalions,  
Forming the wall inside, and great was the task set  
before them,  
Seeing that neither the Lykians stout could the  
Danaan bulwarks  
Break, nor through them a passage could force to  
the enemy's shipping,  
Nor, any more, could the Danaan spearmen the  
Lykian phalanx  
Drive away from the wall whereon they once had a  
footing.  
E'en as a couple of men engaged in the fixing of  
landmarks,  
Standing with measuring rods in their hands, in a  
field that is common,  
Strive in a narrow space that the mark make equal  
division,  
So the parapet, now, the parties divide, and across  
it  
Trojan fought with Achaian, and pounded the buck-  
lers of bull's-hide,  
Full-orbed, held in front of the breast, and the flut-  
tering targes.  
Many a fighter was pierced by the pitiless bronze  
thro' the body —  
All who turned in the fight and their backs exposed  
to the spear-thrust —



Aye, thro' the very shield passed the spear with a  
death-wound to many.

Blood of men besprinkled the towers, and the parapet covered,

Blood of the combatants both, alike of Achaian and Trojan.

Yet, tho' fiercely they strove they prevailed not to rout the Achaians;

Nay, but as woman who spinneth for hire, yet is honest and open,

Poiseth the scales till weight and her yarn shall balance exactly,

Wishing her dues to win for her children a scanty subsistence,

So both parties held out, and neither had any advantage,

Till, of a sudden, dread Zeus gave preëminent glory to Hector —

Glory of being the first to break the wall of the Argives.

Loudly he called, and all over the field was heard of the Trojans: —

“Onward, chivalrous Trojans! Break through the wall of the Argives!

Drive on the ships the god-given fire that mortal can quench not!”

Such was his rallying cry, and the Trojans heard, and  
with spirit  
Made a dash for the wall all together, some of them  
climbing  
Up by the buttresses. sharp spears holding, and  
glorious Hector  
Seized and lifted a stone which lay in front of the  
gateway,  
Thick at the bottom and sharp at the top, a stone so  
unwieldy  
Hardly two men of the stoutest could lift it, and load  
on a wagon —  
Men as mortals now are — but alone he easily  
swung it.  
Like as a shepherd the fleece of a ram can easily  
carry,  
One hand only sufficing, and findeth the burden a  
light one,  
Even so Hector uplifted the stone, and easily bore it  
Straight at the double doors that guarded the  
stubborn-set portals,  
Fastened within by cross-bars twain, and heavily  
bolted.  
Drawing anigh he stood and, bracing himself for the  
effort,  
Setting his legs apart to give full force to the stonecast,  
Smote the gates in the middle, and off brake both of  
the hinges.

---

Well inside of the gates flew the ponderous stone,  
for the cross-bars  
Failed and, bellowing loudly, the great gates parted  
asunder  
Under the rush of the stone; and in sprang glorious  
Hector,  
Black in his brow as night, and awful the gleam of his  
armor.  
Mortal man could not face him as in he sprang  
through the gateway,  
Holding two spears in his hands, and his keen eyes  
blazing like fire.  
Wheeling about he called to the Trojans in all their  
battalions,  
Bidding them over the wall; and they, with his  
orders complying,  
Some leaped over, and some rushed in by the gates;  
and the Argives  
Fled to the hollow ships in unspeakable rout and  
confusion.

## BOOK XVI

SUCH was the desperate fight for the stately ship,<sup>1</sup> as  
    Patroklos  
Came to Achilles, the Myrmidon's lord, and halted  
    beside him,  
Hot tears streaming unstinted adown as a fount of  
    black water  
Poureth its violet flood down rock that goat never  
    clambered.  
On him in secret compassion looked swift-footed  
    godlike Achilles,  
Yet he in wingèd words proceeded to banter him,  
    saying: —

“Why these tears, Patroklos, as sobbeth a little girl  
    baby  
Running her mother beside as she beggeth up to be  
    taken,

<sup>1</sup> At the end of the omitted books (Books XIII, XIV, and XV) the Trojans are attacking the ship of Protesilaos, the first Achaian killed on landing. Otherwise the parts omitted are in no wise essential to the main story. The most interesting incident of the omitted material appears at the end of the two-volume edition of this translation as an episode, “Zeus, Hera and Poseidon.”

Fastens herself on the gown of the mother, and hinders her going,  
Weeping, wild-eyed and wistful till, lo, her mother uplifts her, —  
Like to that baby, Patroklos, thou pourest thy piteous tears.  
Hast thou unhappy disclosure for me or my Myrmidon subjects?  
Bad news is there from Phthia which thou hast heard and no other?  
Living at last accounts was Menoitios, scion of Aktor;  
Living Aiak<sup>ides</sup> Peleus at peace with the Myrmidon peoples —  
Ample cause for our grief, no doubt, if either hath perished.  
Ah, can it be, Patroklos, thy tears are shed for the Argives  
Falling their ships beside, and all for their own transgression?  
Out with it! nothing keep back! I, too, would share in thy sorrow.”

Then, and heavily groaning, thou answeredst, knightly Patroklos: —  
“Oh, Achilles Peleides, thou mightiest far of Achaians,



Be ye not angry, such direful distress hath befallen  
the Argives.

Lo, now, all of our heroes aforetime accounted the  
bravest

Helpless lie at the ships, for all have been hit and  
disabled.

Smitten, for one, is Tydeides, the mighty in fight,  
Diomedes;

Wounded, moreover, is spear-famed Odysseus and  
King Agamemnon;

Valiant Eurypylos, too, is hit in the thigh with an  
arrow.

These men leeches learned in drugs are carefully  
tending,

Healing their wounds; yet thou sittest here impassive,  
Achilles.

Never may anger seize me like this thou so carefully  
nurseth,

Stedfast for ill! How, pray, will men of the future  
regard thee

If, in their sorest need, thou failest to save the  
Achaians?

Pitiless man! No father to thee was chivalrous  
Peleus,

Thetis could never have borne thee; the stormy sea  
was thy mother,

Rocks adamantine begat thee withal, so hard is thy  
nature.

If, unknown to thy friends, thou darest some  
warning from heaven,  
Something thy care-taking mother disclosed, and  
Zeus hath forbidden,  
Then send me, and at once, and the rest of the Myr-  
midons with me,  
Light to bring to the Danaan arms in their gloom of  
disaster.  
Give me moreover this harness of thine to gird on  
my shoulders  
So that the Trojans may think I am thou, and desist  
from the onset,  
Giving our hard-pressed comrades-in-arms a moment  
to breathe in,  
All worn out as they are; and short are the respites  
of battle.  
Easily we who are fresh can make men weary with  
fighting  
Beat a retreat to the town, and save our ships and  
encampment."

Thus he begged and besought and, all unwitting, he  
knew not  
Death and the gloomy grave was the awful boon he  
was asking.  
Greatly stirred was Achilles, and bitterly answered  
him, saying: —

“Ah me, Zeus-born Patroklos; thy words are wild  
and unmeaning.  
Warning from heaven withholdeth me not, nor bidding my mother  
Bringeth from Zeus; but bitter distress my heart  
hath invaded,  
Knowing a man absolutely my equal hath flouted  
and robbed me,  
Seizing the woman my valor had earned and the  
army awarded.  
Her, the fruit of my spear when I captured a fortified  
city,  
King Agamemnon Atreides took from me in haughty  
derision  
Just as if I were an alien unhonored; but still I  
remember  
What 's done cannot be undone; I may not be angry  
forever.  
True, I always declared my wrath should withhold  
me from action  
Till, to my very ships, came savage war-shout and  
battle;  
Yet do thou in mine armor the Myrmidons lead to  
the rescue  
If, as thou sayest, a storm-cloud of Trojans beats  
hard on the shipping,  
Driving before it the cowering Argives to herd on the  
seashore,



Aye, and the city of Troy all cometh against them,  
emboldened

Seeing that longer they face not the visor that front-  
eth my helmet.

Soon would they flee, and their bodies be clogging the  
streams, had Atreides

Dealt with me kindly; but now his army must fight  
for existence.

Not in Diomed's hands, the son of Tydeus the  
mighty,

Rageth the spear any more to avert their doom from  
the Argives,

No, nor hear I the voice of Atreides, shouting the  
war-cry

Out of his hated mouth; but the voice of man-slaying  
Hector

Breaketh about me, exhorting the Trojans, whose  
outcries of triumph

Fill every part of the field as they drive the Achaians  
in battle.

Wroth as I am, Patroklos, to save our ships from  
destruction

Lay on lustily, smiting the Trojans, lest ravening  
fire

Burn up the fleet indeed, and we lose the return we  
have longed for.

Yet give heed; I consent; but understand me on one  
point,

So that thou lose not for me at the hands of my fellow  
Achaïans

Honor and glory exceeding, but still they the beautiful  
damsel

Send me again, and provide me with glorious gifts in  
addition.

When thou hast rescued the ships return forthwith;  
and if Hera's

Lord, high-thundering Zeus, should cover thee over  
with glory,

Go not beyond this apart from me, and pursue thy  
advantage

'Gainst the war-loving Trojans, for thus wilt thou  
minish mine honor.

Nay, more, this for thine own sake, should joy of  
battle inflame thee,

Hot for the fray, and maddened by triumph in slaying  
the Trojans,

March not against their city, lest one of the ever-  
existing

Gods of Olympos should meet thee, for lo, far-smiting  
Apollo

Loveth them well; nay, turn thee again, as soon as  
thou bringest

Light to the ships; and then let the rest in the plain  
do the fighting.

Would that, so help me Zeus, Athena, and Phoibos  
Apollo,

Not one man of them all might escape, be he Trojan  
or Argive,  
Only we twain might survive and Troy's high coronal  
ravish."

Tell me the story, ye Muses, who dwell in Olympian  
mansions,  
Just how it was that the fire first fell on the Danaan  
shipping.

Aias's ashen spear great Hector, drawing anigh  
him,  
Smote with his mighty sword on the shaft just back  
of the spear-head,  
Breaking it right off short; and this Telamonian  
Aias  
Brandished thus in his hands, — a useless weapon,  
— and from him  
Far away on the earth fell the bronze point, lustily  
ringing.  
Then, in his honest heart, did Aias know with a  
shudder  
Gods were at work, and that Zeus who filleth heaven  
with his thunder  
Reft him of use in the conflict and victory wished  
for the Trojans.  
Back he drew from the darts; and the Trojans  
unwearying fire

Cast on the ship, and unquenchable flame streamed  
quickly about her.

Thus at the ship the fire was busy at work, and  
Achilles

Smote both thighs with his hands, and called to Patroklos, saying: —

“Up, now, Zeus-born Patroklos, thou furious driver  
of horses!

Growing apace is the roar of devouring fire by the  
galleys.

Up, lest they take the ships, and escape be open no  
longer!

On with the harness! be quick! and I will assemble  
the people.”

Thus he spake, and Patroklos the bright bronze  
buckled about him,

Taking two ponderous spears of his own, not that of  
Achilles,

Seeing Achilles alone of all the Achaians could wield it.

Next, Patroklos Automedon ordered to harness the  
horses,

Comrade Patroklos esteemed above all other com-  
panions

Next to man-crushing Achilles, and trusty was he as  
a driver.

Straightway under the yoke he led the spirited  
horses,

Xanthos and Balios, swift as the wind, which the  
Harpy, Podargè,  
Bare to the West-wind while grazing a mead by the  
streams of the ocean.  
Then, by a side-trace, beside them he fastened  
Pedasos matchless —  
Spoil that Achilles had brought when he captured  
Eëtion's city —  
Which, though a mortal horse, kept pace with horses  
immortal.

All through the Myrmidon camp, meanwhile,  
Achilles was going,  
Warning the soldiers to arm; and the men responded  
with spirit  
Like unto ravening wolves with unspeakable strength  
in their bosoms,  
Wolves that have slain a great hornèd stag in the  
mountains, and rend him  
Piecemeal; and, eaten their fill, with jaws all red  
from the slaughter,  
First having gone to a black-water fount and lapped  
to repletion,  
Gallop away, a murderous pack, full-bellied and  
fearless:  
So, then, about Patroklos the Myrmidon leaders and  
princes



Rallied; and mid them was standing, aflame with  
impetuous ardor,  
War-wise Achilles, and hurried the chariot-fighters  
and footmen.

Then, when Achilles with soldierly skill had marshalled his forces

All with their leaders, he called them to halt, and  
sternly addressed them: —

“Myrmidons, see ye forget not the threats ye have  
threatened the Trojans,

Threats ye have made, and complaints ye have made,  
all the time that mine anger

Stayed you from battle, and me ye have blamed,  
every man of you, saying: —

‘Bitter, malign son of Peleus, on gall thy mother hath  
reared thee,

Pitiless man, that keepeth in camp thy comrades  
unwilling;

Better take ship and go home since wrath so ill-  
omened hath seized thee.’

Gathered together in knots ye in this fashion clamored  
against me.

War’s stern work looks you now in the face which  
aforetime ye longed for.

Prove it! with strenuous hearts charge mightily now  
on the Trojans! ”



Thus he spake; and every man's heart grew strong  
for the conflict.

Closer their serried ranks closed in at the call of their  
chieftain:

Even as when the walls of a palace the stone-mason  
buildeth,

Fitting the stone-work close to forefend the inroad  
of wind-blast,

So fitted helmets and bellying shields interlocking  
each other,

Shield pressing hard upon shield, man man, and  
helmet on helmet,

Aye, and the horse-hair crests on the helmet-ridge  
as they nodded

Hit as they swayed, so nigh one another the soldiers  
were standing.

Front of the Myrmidons all stood two men shining  
in armor,

Knightly Patroklos and with him Automedon, both of  
them ardent,

Fired by a common ambition to fight in the forefront.  
Achilles

Then went back to his camp, and opened the lid of a  
coffer

Beautiful, curious work, which silver-shod Thetis,  
his mother,

Placed on the ship when he sailed, filled full of rai-  
ment and blankets.

In it a sumptuous goblet he kept, and no man be-  
side him  
Drank from it ever, and never to god made he from  
it libation  
Saving to Zeus, the All-father. And now from the  
coffer he took it,  
Cleansed it with sulphur and rinsed it in streams of  
beautiful water,  
Next washed his own hands clean, and with sparkling  
wine filled the goblet.  
Then in the midst of the court he arose and, making  
libation,  
Looked up to heaven and prayed; and Zeus, dread  
Thunderer, saw him: —

“Zeus Dodonaian, Pelasgic, great Sovran who  
dwellst in remoteness,  
Ruling from wintry Dodona, and round about thee  
the Selloi  
Dwell, and thine oracles utter, with feet unwashen,  
ground-crouching,  
Even as once before this I prayed and thou heardst  
my petition,  
Honoring me, but chastising the Argives with chas-  
tisement heavy,  
So once again I implore thee to grant this further  
entreaty:

Lo, I remain of myself in the circle of ships, but my  
comrade

Send into battle without me, and many a Myrmi-  
don with him.

Grant, O Zeus who watchest afar, that glory attend him,  
Yea, so strengthen the heart in his bosom that arro-  
gant Hector

Also may know if our squire is likewise a master in  
warfare

Even when fighting alone, or hath hands unmatched  
when he rageth

Only when *I* make infuriate charge in the tumults  
of Ares.

Then, when once from the ships he hath driven this  
battle and war-cry,

Let him return, I pray, unscathed to the swift-faring  
galleys,

Bringing his arms, all told, and all his close-fighting  
companions."

Thus he entreated in prayer; and Zeus, dread Ar-  
biter, heard him.

Half his entreaty the father vouchsafed, and half he  
denied him:

Driving the war and the battle away from the  
shipping he granted;

Scathless return when the battle was over, that was  
withholden.

Now, when libation was made and his prayer to the  
Father was ended,  
Back to his camp he returned, and the cup laid  
away in the coffer,  
Then by the front of his quarters he stood, for his  
turbulent spirit  
Longed for the terrible sight as Achaian encountered  
with Trojan.

During this while Patroklos and men, all shining in  
armor,  
Marched in the pride of their might straight on till  
they fell on the Trojans.  
Like unto wasps which nest by a roadside, and mis-  
chievous children  
Always are stirring them up, and roguish boys are  
tormenting,  
Till, in the end, they make them a common nuisance  
to all men;  
So, when a wayfaring man passeth by with no  
thought to molest them,  
Every infuriate wasp swarmeth out, full of fight for  
its children;  
Such were the Myrmidons then and, with similar  
spirit and vigor,  
Came pouring out of the Danaan camp with un-  
quenchable shoutings.

Down on the Trojans they fell in a mass; and the  
shipping about them  
Echoed their terrible cries and the roar of the shout-  
ing Achaians.

Now when the Trojans beheld Menoitios' son in  
his valor,  
Both himself and his squire resplendent in glittering  
armor,  
All felt sinking of heart, and the stoutest phalanxes  
wavered,  
Thinking that mighty Achilles was come, and his  
quarrel was ended.  
All looked this way and that for escape from impend-  
ing destruction.

First, with his shining spear, Patroklos directed a  
spear-cast  
Straight at the press where the ship was on fire and  
the throng was the greatest —  
Even along by the galley of great-souled Protesi-  
láös.  
Noble Pyraichmes he hit, who had led the Paionian  
horsemen  
Thither from Amydon, far from the Axios, wide-flow-  
ing river;



Him he smote in the shoulder, the right one, and  
groaning, Pyraichmes  
Fell on his back in the dust; and his friends, his  
Paionian comrades,  
Scattered and fled, in dread of Patroklos who van-  
quished their greatest.  
So, from the ships he drave them, and quenched the  
riotous fire.  
Left to itself was the ship half burned; and the  
terrified Trojans  
Fled with a wondrous cry; and the Danaans forth  
from their hidings  
Poured through the camp half lost; and ceaseless  
their shouts of rejoicing.  
Like to the change when Zeus, who gathereth light-  
nings together,  
Brusheth aside from the summit of mighty moun-  
tain a storm-cloud,  
Suddenly showing its peaks, its jutting cliffs, and its  
valleys,  
And, from the rifted heaven, breaketh down the mys-  
terious ether:  
So gleamed the Danaan hope when fire was dispelled  
from the shipping,  
Having a moment to breathe in; for war's alarms  
were not over,  
Seeing the Trojans, though driven in rout, but yield  
to compulsion.



## THE TROJANS FINALLY GIVE WAY

Swift as a cloud from Olympos at times cometh into  
the heavens

Sped from the ether divine, when Zeus outspreadeth  
a tempest,

So the Trojans depart from the ships with outcries  
and panic,

Neither in order recrossed they the ditch; but his  
swift-footed horses

Hector bore from the fray with his arms; his people  
abandoned

Sorely were stayed, held back by the ditch that was  
dug by the Argives.

Many swift horses so strained on the car that, to  
crown the disaster,

Off broke the chariot-pole at the butt, and they  
fled from their masters, —

Just behind them Patroklos, who urged the Danaans  
fiercely,

Meaning death to the Trojans; and they with their  
shoutings and panic

Choked all the passable ways as they scattered; and  
upward a dust-storm

Spread forth under the clouds, and forward the  
clattering horses

Strained on the road toward the city, far, far from  
the ships and encampment.

Whithersoever Patroklos saw rout and disorder the  
thickest,

Thither he drove with a war-shout; and under his  
axles the Trojans

Fell face down from the car, and the car fell rattling  
over.

Straight on over the trench sprang the spirited steeds  
of Patroklos,

Eager to go, and the soul of Patroklos called loudly  
for Hector,

Longing to smite him; but out and away his swift  
horses bore him.

Even as under a tempest the whole black earth lieth  
stricken

When, in Autumn, great Zeus outpoureth his heavi-  
est rain-storm,

Venting on mortals his anger: the rivers are full to  
o'erflowing,

Torrents rush from the slopes and eat through many  
a hillside,

Then with a roar and a rush roll thundering down to  
the ocean,

Headlong down from the hills, and the works of the  
husbandmen perish:

So the horses of Troy galloped thundering on to the  
city.

## PATROKLOS FORGETS THE WARNING OF ACHILLES

Then to his horses Patroklos called, and Automedon  
ordered —

Lo, his wits were confounded — to drive on after  
the Trojans,

Blinded! for had he but faithfully kept to the word  
of Achilles,

Then had he scaped his doom and grim death's  
awful encounter.

Mightier, mightier always, the counsels of Zeus than  
of mortals!

Zeus, it was Zeus, who awoke in his heart that fatal  
ambition.

Whom didst thou slay, fond man, when to death the  
immortals had called thee?

First Adrestos, Autonoös next, then Echeklos, Epistor,  
Perimos, great son of Megas, and Moulios, then  
Melanippos;

Elasos later he slew, and Pyrlartes; these men were  
fighters,

These men fell; but the rest thought only of flight  
from Patroklos.

Right then high-gated Troy had fallen a prey to the  
Argives

Under the hands of Patroklos, whose spear raged  
wide all about him,

Saving that Phoibos Apollo on Troy's high towers  
was standing,  
Aiding the Trojans, and meaning for him things  
cursèd and baneful.  
Thrice Patroklos had climbed up the lofty wall on the  
corner,  
Thrice Apollo dislodged him, the shining shield of  
Patroklos  
Smiting with hand immortal; but when Patroklos  
the fourth time  
Dashed at the wall like a being immortal, Apollo  
severely  
Spake, and in wingèd words, gave stinging rebuke to  
him, saying: —

“Give back, give back, Zeus-born Patroklos! Not  
under *thy* spear  
Fated is Troy, this city of warriors, to sink to its  
downfall,  
No, nor Achilles either, a man much greater than  
thou art.”

Thus he spake; and Patroklos retired far, very far  
backward,  
Shunning the wrath of the god, far-smiting Apollo.  
Now, Hector

Close by the Skaian Gates was holding his storm-footed horses,  
Pondering whether to drive once again into battle, or better  
Order retreat to the wall; and as thus in his heart he debated,  
Phoibos Apollo drew nigh in the guise of a mortal, a hero  
Forceful and mighty, Asios named, Queen Hekabè's brother,  
Therefore an uncle of horse-taming Hector, and being moreover  
Dymas's son who in Phrygia dwelt by Sangarios River.  
Taking that honored form, Apollo spake to him, saying: —

“Hector, why art thou shrinking from battle? It doth not behoove thee.  
Would I were so much the stronger than thou as in fact I am weaker;  
Then right soon to thy hurt were this slinking a coward from battle.  
Up, then, and straight at Patroklos urge on thy strong-footed horses!  
At him and slay him! find out if Apollo will victory grant thee.”



Thus spake the god, and departed again in the  
turmoil of mortals.

Then to Kebríones fiery-of-heart called glorious Hector,  
Bidding him whip up the horses and drive to the  
fray; but Apollo

Plunging into the throng brought dread and dismay  
to the Argives,

Whilst he to Troy and to Hector made glory walk as  
companion.

Hector the rest of the Danaans passed, nor attempted  
to slay them,

Seeking Patroklos only; and he, to earth, when he  
saw it,

Sprang from his chariot down, and held his spear  
in his left hand,

Keeping concealed in the other a stone both heavy  
and jagged.

Bracing himself for the cast he hurled it, not slowly  
either,

No, nor vain was the bolt, but Hector's charioteer,  
Bastard son of Priam renowned, Kebríones, hit in  
the forehead.

Both of his brows the stone mashed in, and his eyes  
from their sockets

Fell in the dust before him; and, stunned, he down  
like a diver

Plunged from the chariot strong, and soul from body  
departed.



Tauntingly then to the dead thou saidest, knightly  
Patroklos: —

“Look, right frisky this fellow! Just see how briskly  
he diveth!

Wide market he could supply if at sea, in diving for  
oysters,

Leaping right down from a ship, be the weather no  
matter how stormy,

Granting the skill he displays by this chariot-leap  
be a sample.

Verily even in Troy the men who are divers are  
experts.”

Whilst he was speaking Patroklos had rushed for  
Kebríones hotly,

Even as rusheth a lion that, making assault on a  
sheepfold,

Getteth sore hit in the breast, and his very strength  
is his ruin.

Hector, the while, to earth from his chariot sprang  
to withstand him.

Over Kebríones, then, they fought as a couple of lions  
Fight on a mountain height when both are haughty  
of spirit,

Both of them hungry, a stag they have slain the prize  
of the contest;

So, for Kebríones' sake these two dread terrors in  
battle,

Even Patroklos, Menoitios' son, and glorious Hector,  
Panted to slay, and their bronze-shod spears knew  
nothing of pity.

Hector laid hold of Kebríones' head, Patroklos his  
foot, to defend him

One, to despoil him the other, and neither let go, and  
about them

Danaans gathered and Trojans, and fought in tumult-  
uous battle.

Even as storm-winds twain, as Euros and Notos  
contending,

Strive in a mountain glen to shake its luxuriant  
forests,

Beat on the beech-tree and ash, and the smooth thin  
bark of the cornel,

Making them drive at each other their long, hard,  
tapering branches,

All with bewildering din from the pounding and crash  
of the breakage;

So the Achaians and Trojans dashed madly the one  
at the other

Slaying and slain, and no one of the twain even  
thought of retreating.

Many a keen-edged spear fell over Kebríones  
fallen,

All about him were death-winged shafts flying hot  
from the bowstring,

Many a ponderous stone smote shields of heroes  
undaunted,  
Warring about him; and there in the dust-storm and  
whirlwind of missiles,  
Great in his greatness Kebríones lay, and of chivalry  
dreamed not.

Now, till the noontide sun had come to the zenith,  
the missiles  
Flew on both sides alike, and the fall of the people  
was equal;  
But, when it started its turn at the time for unyoking  
of oxen,  
Then, more than fate had decreed, the Achaians pre-  
vailed, and the body  
Drew both from dart and from Trojan assault, and  
stripped it of armor;  
Also Patroklos, athirst for their blood, kept charging  
the Trojans.  
Thrice he charged on them then with the swiftness  
of Ares the war-god,  
Shouting his terrible war-cry, and nine men thrice  
were his victims;  
But, directly he charged with godlike abandon the  
fourth time,  
Straightway, then, O Patroklos, the end of life  
glowered upon thee.

Lo, it was Phoibos who met thee in mighty conflict,  
the Dire One:  
Coming thou sawest him not, for hidden in darkness  
he met thee!  
Halting Patroklos behind, on his shoulders Phoibos  
Apollo  
Smote him with downward stroke, and his eyes saw  
everything whirling.  
Off from his head flew the helmet, and under the feet  
of the horses  
Rolled and rattled away, that glorious helm that  
aforetime  
Never was suffered to smear in the dust, but adorned  
with its splendor  
Brows of a man divine, of Achilles; but Zeus for the  
moment  
Gave it to Hector to wear for a space, for destruc-  
tion was nigh him.  
All the long-shadowed spear in the hands of Patroklos  
was broken,  
Heavy and great, bronze-pointed and strong; and  
off from his shoulders  
Fell to the ground his man-covering shield with its  
glittering baldric.  
Then, too, his mind gave way, and his stalwart  
limbs, and he stood there  
Dazed; and a man of the Trojans, who stood close  
by and beheld him

Gave him a spear-thrust the shoulders between; his  
name was Euphorbos,  
Panthoös' son, and surpassed all men of his age at  
the spear-cast,  
Also in swiftness of foot, and in horsemanship; even  
that very  
Day, though unpracticed in chariot fight, and of  
warfare a learner,  
Twenty men had from chariot cast, and was first with  
his weapon  
Also at thee, O Patroklos, yet gave not thy death-  
blow; his spear -  
First he withdrew, then mixed in with the throng, not  
even then daring  
Face Patroklos in fight to the death, though reft of  
his armor.  
Then Patroklos, subdued by the blow of the god and  
the spear-thrust,  
Shrank back into the Danaan lines, avoiding de-  
struction.

Now, when Hector beheld great-hearted Patroklos  
retreating,  
Smit with the bronze, he pursued, and, o'ertaking,  
gave him a spear-thrust,  
Hitting the belly low down, and drave clean through  
him the spear-head.



Down he fell with a crash, and sorely the Danaans  
mourned him.

Even as boar untiring when crushed in fight by a  
lion —

Both on a mountain top contending in pride of their  
prowess

Over a little spring where both are bent upon drink-  
ing, —

Dieth with many a gasp, overmatched by the  
strength of the lion,

So, on the day of his glory, the mighty son of Menoitios  
Fell, and Priamides Hector of life by a spear-thrust  
despoiled him,

And, in his pride, thus boasted in wingèd words o'er  
the fallen: —

“O Patroklos, in fancy thou saidst thou wouldst cap-  
ture my city,

Wrest from the women of Troy the day of their  
freedom forever,

Carry them off in thy sea-going ships to the land  
thou wast born in,

Fool that thou wert! when before them the swift-  
paced horses of Hector

Stretch out their feet for the fray; and I myself  
with my spear

Stand a man of renown, with the war-loving Trojans  
to back me,



Warding their doom, and, for *thy* doom, the kites and  
the vultures shall eat thee.

Ah, unhappy, no service was done thee by mighty  
Achilles

Skulking himself but sending thee forth, and charg-  
ing thee straitly:

‘Never return to the Myrmidon camp, horse-taming  
Patroklos,

Not till thou bringest as trophy the mail of man-slay-  
ing Hector

Stained with his blood, and the breast torn through  
by the spear-cast that slew him.’

That was his fashion of talk, and thou wert a fool  
and believed him.”

Faint and low this answer thou madest him, knightly  
Patroklos: —

“Now is thine hour, O Hector, of triumph; victory  
o’er me

Zeus son of Kronos hath given, and Apollo; they have  
subdued me

Easily; lo, it was they who tore from my shoulders  
the armor.

Twenty such men as thou, if all had attacked me  
together,

All had died on the spot — my spear had sufficed to  
subdue them.

I of accursèd fate and Leto’s son was the victim,

Yea, and of men Euphorbos, and thou wert third in  
my slaying.

One thing more will I tell thee to lay in thy heart and  
to ponder, —

This, that not long, not long, wilt thou live thyself,  
but already

Death is stalking close by thee, and Fate that re-  
lents not, and surely

Fall thou must by the hand of Aiak'ides, matchless  
Achilles."

Thus he spake and was still, and the shadow of death  
overspread him;

Flitting away from his limbs the soul descended to  
Hades,

Wailing over its doom, and manhood leaving and  
youthhood.

Then, though he spake to the dead, great Hector  
answered him, saying: —

"Wherefore, Patroklos, foretellest thou me my  
death is impending?

Who can know but Achilles, the son of lovely-haired  
Thetis,

Under my spear may fall, that foredoomed is *his*  
death, not my death."

Thus he said, as the spear he withdrew from the corse  
of Patroklos,  
Setting his foot on the body, and then for Autome-  
don started  
Hoping to slay him; but off and away sped the  
squire of Achilles,  
Borne by the horses immortal, the god-given horses  
of Peleus.

## BOOK XVII

Not unmarked by Atreides, the mighty in fight,  
Menelaus,  
Fell Patroklos in battle; he straight in glittering  
armor  
Strode to the front, and the corse bestrode, as calf  
by a heifer  
Lowling over her first-born and new to the cares of a  
mother.  
So, in his auburn hair, Menelaus stood over Patroklos:  
Spear in hand he stood, and his shield held over the  
body,  
Ready to slay on the spot whosoever should sally  
against it.  
Equally keen was the son of the veteran Panthoös;  
seeing  
Gallant Patroklos down, he was there in a moment  
and, halting,  
Said in a threatening tone:—“Thou king, Menelaus Atreides,  
Off! let this body alone! Begone from the spoils of  
the dead man!

First was I of the Trojans and all the allies in his  
slaying;  
Therefore, to lose not the glory I earned in the eyes  
of the Trojans,  
Go, that I smite thee not, and of honey-sweet life  
dispossess thee."

Bursting with rage outspake Menelaus, and answered  
him, saying:  
"All-father Zeus, but this is unseemly, this insolent  
bluster!  
Panthers are not so audacious, nor lions; no boar of  
the wild-wood,  
Stalking about in malevolent might when his heart is  
the highest,  
Matcheth these arrogant children of Panthoös; one,  
notwithstanding,  
Got no good from his youth, Hyperénor, tamer of  
horses,  
When with revilings he faced me, and said that of  
Danaan warriors  
I was the weakest; not on his *own* feet, I ween, went  
the braggart  
Home to gladden the wife of his youth and the par-  
ents who bred him.  
So, too, be sure will I wither thy might, if thou  
darest to face me.

Off then! I bid thee avaunt, and into the multitude  
vanish,  
Else thou wilt get into trouble. The fool knoweth  
after he 's done for."

Thus he spake, but persuaded him not, and prompt  
was his answer: —

"Now, without fail, Menelaus Atreides, a stern  
retribution

Suffer thou shalt for the brother thou slewest, his  
bride in her chamber

Widowed, and broughtest our parents unspeakable  
sorrow and mourning.

Unto that sorrowing pair I should be true stay of their  
weeping,

Granting I carry and toss in their hands thy head  
and thine armor.

Win or lose, the feat shall be neither untried nor un-  
fought for."

Thus having spoken, he threw, and his spear hit the  
shield of Atreides,

Yet it brake not the bronze, but was bent in the  
ponderous buckler.

Then Menelaus, in *his* turn, with prayer to Zeus, the  
All-father,

Just as the other drew back from his stroke, by dex-  
terous spear-cast



Pierced his throat at the base, and, adding the weight  
of his body,

Followed the cast with a thrust through the tender  
neck; and Euphorbos

Fell to the earth with a crash, and his armor rattled  
about him.

Drenched with blood was his hair, which was bright  
as the hair of the Graces,

Even their glorious braids with gold and silver to  
bind them.

Like as a thrifty young olive, a sapling by husband-  
men nurtured,

Grown in a spot where water aboundeth and open to  
sunshine,

Waxeth in beauty and strength; and the quickening  
breezes of heaven

Breathe on and toss it, till, lo, it is white with its  
glory of blossoms;

Then, of a sudden, the merciless blast of a mighty  
tornado,

Twisteth it out from its place, and layeth it low on  
the greensward;

So, in piteous fairness, the youth Euphorbos was  
lying,

Slain by the king, Menelaus Atreides, and stripped  
of his armor.

Like as a lion that lairs in the mountains and,  
haughty of spirit,

Seizeth a cow from a herd as it feeds, and always  
the best one,  
Breaketh her neck in his powerful jaws, and drinketh  
her life-blood  
Greedily, while in confusion are dogs about him and  
herdsmen  
Yelling and barking, but keeping their distance, and  
none of the party  
Dareth approach the intruder, and pale are their  
faces with terror;  
So no man of the Trojans had nerve to face Menelaus.  
Easily, then, had Atreides made spoil of the arms of  
Euphorbos  
Save that Apollo begrudged him the glory, and  
roused to oppose him  
Hector, the mighty in battle; for, taking the form  
of a mortal,  
Even of Mentès, who led the Kikonians, Phoibos  
Apollo  
Fired him with wingèd words, and spake to him  
warningly, saying: —

“Lo, now, thou art pursuing things quite unattain-  
able, Hector,  
Seeking to capture the horses of headstrong Achilles;  
for mortals  
Hard are those horses to master or drive, at least to  
another

Saving Achilles himself, who was born of a mother  
immortal.

Stout Menelaus the while is defending Patroklos,  
and further

Slain the best of the Trojans, Euphorbos, and ended  
his prowess."

Thus spake the god, and vanished again in the con-  
flict of heroes.

Keen were the pangs that thronged the darkening  
spirit of Hector,

And, as he peered down the ranks, Menelaus he saw  
in a moment

Stripping the glorious arms from the fallen, the other  
one lying

Dead on the field; and blood from the wound that  
slew him was running.

Straight to the front of the fray sped Hector in  
glittering armor,

Shouting, and sharp was his terrible cry, as towards  
him he fiercely

Rushed like the quenchless flame of Hephaistos;  
Prince Menelaus

Heard, and he said in his heart which was throbbing  
with bitter emotion: —

"Shame is to me if I leave in this strait this glorious  
armor,

Also Patroklos abandon, a man who perished for my  
sake —

Shame in the eyes of the Danaan host, whoever shall  
see it.

Yet, if from shame I remain and fight with the Tro-  
jans and Hector,

One it will be against many, for Hector is leading his  
army.

Why thus debateth my soul? Who fighteth a man  
heaven-honored

Fighteth with heaven, and straightway his day of  
calamity cometh.

No man, then, of the Danaan host will blame me,  
whoever

Seeth me shrinking from Hector's assault, for gods  
are behind him.

Would I could somewhere see Aias, or hear his in-  
spiriting war-cry,

Then, we both would return to the fight though the  
gods were against us,

Hoping to rescue the body, the best thing now to be  
tried for."

While he was musing the Trojans came on, and Hec-  
tor was leading.

Step by step Menelaus gave ground, and abandoned  
the body,

Ofttimes turning and looking behind, as a strong-  
bearded lion  
Looketh when dogs and men with spears and threat-  
ening outcries  
Drive him away from a sheep-fold, the mighty heart  
in his bosom  
Maddened to think of retreat, and he goeth slow and  
reluctant;  
So, in his auburn hair, Menelaus abandoned Pa-  
troklos.  
When he had come to the Danaan lines he halted  
and, turning,  
Scanned the field to descry Telamonian Aias, and  
quickly  
Saw him, off on the left of the fray, exhorting his  
soldiers,  
Seeing Apollo upon them had cast indescribable  
panic.  
Thither for Aias he went on the run, and called to  
him, saying: —

“Aias, my friend, come hither with me, and for fallen  
Patroklos  
Let us make desperate fight, and the body restore to  
Achilles,  
Naked, 't is true, for the armor is lost and the booty  
of Hector.”



Thus he spake; and Aias's heart was fired to attempt it,  
And, with stout Menelaus, went up where the fore-  
most were fighting.

Now when Hector had stripped from Patroklos his  
glorious armor,

Halting apart from the dolorous fight he decided to  
wear it,

Giving his own to retainers to carry apace to the city.

So the armor immortal he donned, god-given to Peleus.

This, when Peleus was old, he gave to his son, to  
Achilles —

Never, alas, himself to grow old in the arms of his  
father!

When from afar great Zeus who darkeneth heaven  
beheld him

Donning this armor, he nodded his head porten-  
tously, saying: —

“Ah, unhappy! in no wise is death in thy thought,  
but 't is coming,

Oh, how nigh! and thou wearest the god-given arms  
of a hero

Strongest of human kind, and all men tremble before  
him.

Yea, his comrade trusty and stout thou slewest, nor  
meetly

Seized on his arms; but to-day I will grant thee glory  
exceeding,



So to requite thee who never again shalt return from  
the battle,  
Nay, nor place in Andromachè's hands this glorious  
armor."

Thus, in his heart, spake Zeus Kroníon, as darkly  
he nodded,  
Made the armor to fit, and Ares, the terrible war-god,  
Entered the body of Hector, and filled him with  
vigor and courage.  
Forth he stepped to the steadfast allies and, shouting  
exultant,  
Very Ares<sup>1</sup> he seemed, all aflame in the arms of Achilles.  
Then, he, in wingèd words, called out and exhorted  
them, saying: —

"Hearken, ye myriad tribes, allies, and neighboring  
peoples,  
Not mere numbers I sought when I gathered ye in  
from your cities,

<sup>1</sup> Some understand this passage to mean that he looked like Achilles when clad in his armor, others that he showed himself in the arms of Achilles — both admittedly weak interpretations, and explained on the ground that the wearing of Achilles' armor by Patroklos and all that follows incident thereto was an addition to the poem by an unknown hand. Even so it was the hand of a master; and this passage should be given the best interpretation permitted by the text. My rendering, that Hector looked like Ares, seems to me not unwarranted; and it certainly gives these lines significance.

Nay, but zealous defenders to fight for our wives and  
our children.

Just to that end, for your pay and your food I bur-  
den my people,

So that ye all may have heart in the work and your  
spirit be greater.

Now, then, turn ye with front to the foe, to survive  
or to perish;

That is the love-making warfare exacts; and who-  
ever among you

Draggeth Patroklos dead inside the lines of the Trojans,  
Forcing Aias to yield him, his honor and mine shall be  
equal —

He having half of the dead man's spoils, I keeping  
the other."

Ceasing, they lifted their spears, and heavily charged  
on the Argives,

Hoping to capture the body from great Telamonian  
Aias,

Fools! for over that body he spilled the life-blood of  
many.

Then, for the moment disheartened, he said to Prince  
Menelaus: —

"O Menelaus, O comrade, our chance of returning  
from battle,

Even ourselves not to speak of the body, I hope for  
no longer.

Less I fear for Patroklos, for dogs and kites will  
devour him,  
Less than I fear for my own dear head, and thine,  
Menelaus,  
Seeing that Hector, that storm-cloud of battle, en-  
velopeth all things.  
Sheer death looketh us straight in the face. Rouse  
up, Menelaus;  
Call to our aid the Danaan chieftains, whoever may  
hear thee."

Thus he said, and at once Menelaus, good at the  
war-cry,  
Shouted at top of his voice in appeal to the Danaans,  
saying: —

"Leaders and princes of Argos, and all who obey the  
Atreidai —  
King Agamemnon and me, Menelaus — ye chiefs of  
the army  
Holding your honors from Zeus, and who drink at  
expense of the public —  
I cannot see in this dire conflagration of battle to  
name ye —  
Come one and all, wait not to be asked, in hot in-  
dignation  
Thinking that haply Patroklos might feed the dogs  
of the Trojans."

First to hear and respond was Aias, son of Oïleus:  
Next Idomeneus came, and, mighty as Ares the war-  
god,  
Also Meriones with him, his comrade-in-arms; and  
then others,  
All too many for mortal to name, rushed up to the  
rescue.

Massed for the onset the Trojans came on, and Hec-  
tor was leading;  
Then like the roar and the dash at the mouth of a  
heaven-fallen river,  
There where its boisterous current meets waves  
dashing in from the ocean,  
Wild seas seething without, and the tall shores bel-  
low its thunder —  
Deafening thus was the shock as Danaans grappled  
with Trojans.  
First the Trojans prevailed, and drave the dark-eyed  
Achaians,  
Beating them off from the body. They fled, but only  
a moment,  
Seeing that Aias kept turning them back, magnificent  
Aias,  
Goodliest man of the Danaans all in fight and ap-  
pearance,  
All save matchless Achilles; he, now, to the front  
of the fighting

Backward would turn like a boar of the wood which,  
    attacked in the mountains,  
Wheeled on hunters and hounds, and they scatter  
    apace to the dingles;  
So Telamonian Aias turned swiftly and scattered  
    the Trojans  
Hovering over Patroklos, albeit they fondly expected  
Both to prevail in the end, and hale the corse to the  
    city.

Fiercely the combatants all day long fought desperate  
    battle;  
Drenched were their limbs and blinded their eyes  
    with the sweat of the conflict  
Over the mighty dead, and their strong frames spent  
    with its labor.  
Even as when a bull's-hide tough a chief of the people  
Giveth retainers to stretch, first smeared with fat for  
    the purpose,  
Standing apart in a circle they take it and stretch it,  
    and straightway  
Out flows the juice, the fat strikes in, and the stretching  
    is thorough;  
So the combatants both, packed close, strained hard  
    on the body,  
Dragging it this way and that; and both parties  
    equally hopeful,



Trojans to hale it to Troy, to the hollow ships the  
Achaians.

Wild was the tumult; had Ares himself and Pallas  
Athena

Both been watching, their partisan <sup>1</sup> souls aflame for  
the contest,

Neither had found any fault, so bitter and close was  
the struggle

Zeus, that terrible day, outspread for men and for  
horses

Over Patroklos. Achilles the while knew nought  
that had happened,

Seeing the conflict was far from the camp by the wall  
of the Trojans,

Never once dreamed that Patroklos would capture  
the city without him,

No, nor with him; for many a time his mother in  
secret

Told him what Zeus had determined; but this, the  
woe that had happened,

This she withheld, and told not his dearest com-  
panion had fallen.

Over the body, their spears in their hands, the com-  
batants madly

Lunged at each other and slew; and Achaian said  
to Achaian: —

<sup>1</sup> Athena favored the Achaians and Ares the Trojans.



“Friend, no glory to us to return to our barracks;  
    nay, rather  
Black earth yawn for us here! ’t were better, very  
    much better,  
Rather than yield to the horse-taming Trojans, de-  
    feated, and let them  
Victory win, and in triumph this body hale to their  
    city.”

Over against them the Trojan in like heart said to  
    his neighbor: —  
“Friend, though it be our fate to perish over this  
    body,  
All of us, man upon man, let no soul shrink from the  
    battle.”

Thus spake Trojan and Danaan both; and his com-  
    rades, emboldened,  
Fought with a spirit according; and clang like the  
    ringing of iron  
Rose to a heaven of bronze through the paths of the  
    verdureless ether.  
Now, apart from the conflict, the horses immortal  
    of Peleus  
Wept, and ceased not to weep when they saw their  
    charioteer  
Fallen prone in the dust at the hands of man-slaying  
    Hector.

Smartly, be sure, had Automedon's whip been  
wielded to start them;  
Afterwards coaxing he tried, and then he had sworn  
at them roundly,  
All three many times over, but not one jot nor a tittle  
Budged they, and neither would go to the Hellespont-  
shore nor to battle.  
Nay, as firm as a pillar set up on the tomb of a dead  
man,  
So they stood stock still, and held the chariot likewise,  
Crowding their heads to the ground; and hot tears  
flowed from their eyelids,  
Weeping Patroklos — their glorious manes escaped  
from the cushion  
Fallen both sides the yoke, and defiled with the dust  
of their mourning.<sup>1</sup>

Sorrowing thus were the twain, and Kronion, be-  
holding with pity,  
Said in his heart as he nodded his head with thought-  
ful compassion: —

<sup>1</sup> The Homeric man in token of mourning poured dust on his head. As the immortal horses could not do this they accomplished the same purpose by crowding their heads into the earth. Oddly enough I find no authority for this interpretation, which is manifestly the true one. Near the end of Book XIX in a similar passage the horse Xanthos *hangs* his head in abasement; but the verb used here is elsewhere applied to a spear driven into the earth with such violence that the spear-shaft quivers.

“Ah! ye unhappy pair! Why, why did we give you  
to Peleus?

Why to a mortal man, when ageless are ye and  
immortal?

Was it that you might share in the woes of your  
suffering masters?

Yea, for of all things that be on the earth, all that  
breatheth and creepeth,

Naught is more wretched than man; but you and the  
beautiful chariot,

High-plumed Hector shall drive not nor ride, — I  
will never permit it.

Is 't not enough how he vaunteth himself in the  
god-given armor?

Yea, now, their wonted strength I restore to your  
knees and your spirit,

So ye may bear from the battle Automedon safe to  
the shipping,

Seeing I still, till the sun goeth down, and darkness  
is on us,

Grant the Trojans to slay, even back to the Danaan  
galleys.”

Thus he spake; and the horses, inspired with a new  
resolution,

Shook the dust from their manes, and briskly sped  
to the battle.

Over Patroklos, again, had stretched the furious  
conflict,

Hard-fought, terrible, roused by Athena descended  
from heaven.

Like to the amethyst bow Zeus stretcheth to mortals  
from heaven,

Either an omen of war or of wintry storm which  
compelleth

Man to cease from his labors, and beasts of the field  
it distresseth:

So, enwrapped in an amethyst-cloud, she plunged in  
the contest.

First Menelaus she heartened, for nigh him she  
haply alighted,

Taking the shape and unwearying voice of the vet-  
eran, Phoinix: —

“Thine, Menelaus, will be the reproach and the  
shame if Patroklos,

Faithful squire of Achilles, be torn by the dogs of  
the Trojans.

Up, then! Mightily set on the foe, and inspirit thy  
comrades!”

Then, for answer, responds Menelaus good at the  
war-cry: —

“Phoinix, time-honored sire of the past, I would that  
Athena

Masterly might would vouchsafe, and fend me from  
missiles; in that case  
Glad would I be to stand by and protect him; the  
death of Patroklos  
Deeply toucheth my heart; but Hector like ravening  
fire  
Never ceaseth 'to slay, for Zeus maketh glory attend  
him."

Thus he spake, and glad was the goddess, bright-  
eyed Athena,  
Seeing he named her first of the gods, and his knees  
and his shoulders  
Strengthened, and put in his heart a fly's invincible  
daring,  
Which, though driven again and again from the flesh  
of its victim,  
Still returneth and biteth, and blood of man is its  
dainty:  
Instinct with daring like that Menelaus, bestriding  
Patroklos,  
Cast his spear with a will. Now, a man there was of  
the Trojans,  
Podes, Eëtion's son, both rich and headmost in fight-  
ing,  
Honored by Hector as comrade-in-arms and as table  
companion;



Him, as he started to flee, Menelaus hit in the  
girdle,  
Driving the spear clean through. He fell with a crash;  
and his slayer  
Dragged the dead man <sup>1</sup> away from under the eyes  
of the Trojans.

Taking the guise of a guest-friend of Hector who  
dwelt in Abydos,  
Phainops, Asios' son, Apollo admonished him,  
saying: —

“Hector, what other Achaian will shrink from thee  
longer who shunnest  
Such as is this Menelaus, no great as a warrior afore-  
time,  
Yet hath he now all alone, right under the nose of the  
Trojans,  
Taken the dead man and gone, and hath slain thy  
trusty companion,  
Podes, Eëtion's son, a fighter who fought with the  
foremost.”

<sup>1</sup> The original has the same ambiguity as the translation as to which dead man is meant; but it must have been Patroklos, whose body up to this time certainly was not in the possession of the Achaians, but was so during the remainder of the book. This interpretation also gives some significance to the coming of Athena.

Thus said Apollo; and Hector, o'erswept with a tempest of sorrow,  
Sped to the front of the fight enveloped in glittering armor;  
Right then Kronides Zeus laid hold of his many-fringed aegis  
Shining, and Ida enveloped in clouds, and hurling his lightning  
Mightily thundered, the broad earth shook, and in haughty dominion  
Victory gave to the Trojans, and smote the Achaians with panic.

First Penéleös started the flight, a Boeötian chieftain,  
Hit by a spear in the shoulder while fronting the foe,  
and the spear-point  
Grazed the bone—by Polyd'amas cast who had come close beside him.  
Léitos, next, the son of Alek'tryon, Hector disabled,  
Piercing his hand by the wrist, so the spear he longer could wield not;  
Then Idomeneus, aiming at Hector at Léitos darting,  
Smote his breastplate of bronze, but the spear-head brake at its socket.

Loudly shouted the Trojans; and then Idomeneus  
straightway

Hastened to mount on Meriones' car, for the former  
to battle

Started on foot; and Hector let drive at him whilst  
he was mounting.

Him he narrowly missed — great triumph to Troy  
had he slain him,

Ancient Deukalion's son, — but Koranos, chariot-  
eer,

Hit in the jaw, and the teeth and the tongue he clave  
with the spear-point.

Thus he Idomeneus saved, but his own life lost in  
the saving.

Down from the car he dropped, and the reins flew  
wide, but his master,

Even Meriones, gathered them up and Idomeneus  
ordered: —

“Lay on briskly, nor cease till we come to our ships  
and encampment!

Even thyself canst see that success hath deserted  
the Argives.”

Thus he said; and the heavy-maned steeds Idom-  
meneus wildly

Lashed to the hollow ships, for his soul was shaken  
with terror.

Now, that the tide of the battle had turned, and  
victory shifted,  
Scaped not the war-trained eyes of Aias and stout  
Menelaus.  
First of the twain to speak was great Telamonian  
Aias: —

“Surely, the veriest fool would know Zeus aideth  
the Trojans,  
Seeing their shafts all hit, whether brave men cast  
them or cowards;  
Zeus directeth all theirs, — all ours strike earth,  
ineffective.  
Come, let us frame some plan by ourselves for re-  
turning this body,  
Aye, and returning ourselves, to the joy of our anx-  
ious companions  
Now looking hither with dread, nor expecting that  
man-slaying Hector’s  
Might and invincible hands can long be kept from  
the shipping.  
Would some comrade were here to carry the news to  
Achilles,  
Seeing he wist not, I ween, that his loved Patroklos  
hath perished.  
Scan the battlefield, King Menelaus, haply to find  
there,

Young Antilochos living, the son of illustrious  
Nestor.

Send him with speed to say to Achilles his comrade  
is fallen."

Suiting action to word, away went blond Menelaus,  
Peering in every direction as peereth an eagle,  
reputed

Keenest sighted of birds, which, sailing aloft in the  
heavens,

Still never faileth to see the fleet-footed hare as he  
croucheth

Deep in the leaves of a thicket he seeketh for shelter,  
but on him

Pounceth, and taketh his life; such then wert thou,  
Menelaus,

Such was the gleam of thine eyes as they roved  
through the host of thy comrades,

Searching if thou mightest find there the son of  
Nestor still living.

Him he quickly descried far off on the left of the  
battle,

Urging his men to fight, and promptly spake to him,  
saying: —

"Prince Antilochos, hither a moment, and terrible  
tidings

Hear, and would it had never befallen! Thou seest  
that heaven,



Even thyself I ween, on the Danaans rolleth disaster,  
Victory giving to Troy; but the chief of Achaians is fallen,  
Even Patroklos, and great is the grief it hath wrought in the army.  
Haste thee, and go on the run to the Danaan ships with the tidings,  
Hoping Achilles will speedily aid us to rescue the body  
Reft of the arms, which crest-waving Hector now weareth in triumph."

Thus he said; and, hearing his word, Antilochos longtime  
Stood there, eyes full of tears, and speechless with grief and with horror.  
Still, even thus, he failed not to heed Menelaus's bidding,  
Handed his arms to a comrade, and started apace on his errand.  
Back to the Aiases twain Menelaus returned, and reported: —

"Yonder youth have I sent to the ships with word to Achilles,  
Yet no aid will he give us, I ween, though bitterly angered,

Seeing he cannot, unarmed, come forth to war with  
the Trojans.

We, as we can, must devise by ourselves to rescue  
the body,

Aye, and our own lives save from the deadly assaults  
of the Trojans."

Then for rejoinder responded the chief, Telamonian  
Aias: —

"Right thou art, Menelaus; do thou and Meriones  
straightway

Lift to your shoulders the body, and haste with it out  
of the turmoil.

We, two, Aias Oïleus and I, from behind will defend  
you,

We who are brothers in spirit and name, and oft  
have aforetime

Stood up shoulder to shoulder repelling the onsets  
of Ares."

Suiting action to word they, twining their arms round  
the body,

Raised it aloft; and, seeing the deed, the Trojans  
behind them

Shouted amain and the bearers pursued. As the  
hounds of a hunter

Dash on a boar that is wounded, determined to tear  
him in pieces,

But, when he feeleth his strength and whirleth  
against them, they scatter:  
So, for a time, all Troy in a pack was running about  
them,  
Smiting with swords and with spears; but the  
Aiases, suddenly wheeling,  
Always brought them to halt, and pale grew their  
faces, and no man  
Ventured to forge by *them* to the front, and fight for  
the body.

While thus struggled the twain to carry the dead from  
the battle,  
Wild raved the conflict about them, as fire leaping  
down on a city,  
Suddenly started, which flameth apace, and madly  
it roareth  
Under the power of the wind; and, mightily glaring  
and swooping,  
Houses crumble and vanish before it in dire con-  
flagration;  
Such was the tumult and din of horses and men round  
the bearers.  
They, like mules straining all their strength as they  
drag from a mountain  
Over a difficult spot ship-timber or beam, and their  
spirit

Flags with the toil, and sweat poureth down as they  
    press through the thickets,  
So they labored to carry the body. Behind them a  
    bulwark  
Strong were the Aiases twain; and as wooded ridge  
    in a valley  
Foileth the onset of turbulent rivers, which, all  
    unavailing,  
Strive to rend it in sunder and, baffled, elsewhere  
    wander,  
So the Aiases ever forced back the assaults of the  
    Trojans.  
Yet they followed them close, and two were specially  
    active,  
Even Aineias, son of Anchises, and glorious Hector.  
Even as clouds of starlings and daws, confusedly  
    screaming,  
Flee when a hawk draweth nigh, — that bearer of  
    death to the puny —  
So the Danaan youth, when Hector came nigh and  
    Aineias,  
Shrieked with dismay, their courage forgat, and fled  
    in a panic.  
Many the glorious arms along by the ditch that were  
    scattered,  
Thrown away in their flight, and the war knew  
    naught of cessation.

## BOOK XVIII

THUS were they fighting like ravening fire, as Antil-  
ochos duly  
Came with hurrying feet his tidings to bear to  
Achilles;  
Stationed in front of his straight-horned ships Antil-  
ochos found him  
Filled with anxious forebodings of all that in truth  
had befallen.  
Greatly perturbed, to his tempest-tossed soul he  
inwardly muttered: —

“Woe, ah, woe is to me! why again are the long-  
haired Achaians  
Leaving the field in disorderly rout, and running  
for shelter?  
Fallen, too surely is fallen, the mighty son of Men-  
oitios,  
Headstrong! yet straitly I bade him, when saved  
from fire was the shipping,  
March straight back into camp, not hazard a combat  
with Hector.”



While in his heart and soul were tossed these bodings  
of mischief,  
Up came running before him the son of illustrious  
Nestor,  
Hot tears streaming adown, and told his message of  
sorrow: —

“Woe is to me, son of Peleus, that I am the bearer of  
tidings  
Bitter for thee to hear, — and would it had never  
befallen!  
Dead on the field is Patroklos, the fighting is now  
for the body,  
Stripped of the arms, which crest-waving Hector  
now weareth in triumph.”

Thus he spake, and a storm-cloud of anguish en-  
shrouded Achilles.  
Wildly in both of his hands he, clutching the soot  
from the embers,  
Poured it adown his head, and his comely face was  
disfigured,  
While, on his perfumed doublet, fell thick the grime  
of the ashes.  
Stretched in the dust was his princely form and,  
great in his greatness,  
Lay he and tore his hair, his own hands marring its  
beauty.

Then the women Patroklos and he had taken as  
captives

Frantic, with piercing shrieks came running out from  
their quarters,

Flocked round mighty Achilles, and all in a blaze of  
excitement

Beat their breasts with their hands, and the limbs  
grew faint underneath them.

Wailing, before him Antilochos stood, and with tears  
fast falling,

Held the hands of Achilles, whose whole frame  
writhed in his anguish,

Seeing he feared that Achilles might cleave his neck  
with the iron.<sup>1</sup>

Dreadful to hear were his groans; and the queenly  
goddess, his mother,

Heard in the depths of the sea where she sat by her  
father, the Ancient.

Loudly she wailed in return; and the sea-nymphs  
gathered about her,

All, as many as dwell in the deeps, fair daughters of  
Nereus —

All, till the silver cavern was full; and the throng all  
together

Beat their breasts, while Thetis led off in her story  
of sorrow: —

<sup>1</sup> The only suggestion of suicide in the Iliad.

“Hearken, Nereïd sisters, and know my woes in  
their fullness.

Woe is me, unhappy! a blest but unfortunate  
mother!

Blest, abundantly blest, in a son that is matchless  
and mighty,

Chivalry's very flower! The boy ran up like a sap-  
ling,

And, when grown, like a sturdy stalk on the slope of  
a vineyard,

Hither I sent him to Troy to war with the Trojans,  
and never,

Never shall welcome him back to his childhood-home  
a survivor.

That is not all: even now while he liveth and seeth  
the sunlight

Woes keep coming, and go as I may I am powerless to  
help him.

Going I am, notwithstanding, to look at my boy, and  
discover

What new sorrow betideth him now, though keeping  
from battle.”

Suiting action to word she left the cavern, and with her  
Went her companions in tears with the sea-waves  
breaking about them.

Up on the Trojan beach they trooped, where the  
Myrmidon galleys

Lay close together, drawn up on the shore, and encircled Achilles.

Heavily groaning he lay, and anigh him the goddess,  
his mother,

Drew with a piercing cry, and her son's head clasped  
to her bosom,

And, with a mother's yearning, spake wingèd words  
to him, saying: —

“Why, my child, art thou weeping? what sorrow  
thy heart hath invaded?

Tell it, and nothing conceal; the word of Zeus is  
accomplished

Surely, — all that thou prayed for aforetime, that,  
hemmed in their shipping

Needing thine aid, the Achaians might suffer disgrace  
and disaster.”

Then, and he heavily groaned, Achilles answered her,  
saying: —

“Yea, all *that* the Olympian lord hath done as I  
prayed him,

Yet, what sweetness to me, now my trusty comrade  
hath perished,

Even Patroklos, the one that I loved more than all  
his companions,

Even as mine own life! he is fallen, and Hector that  
slew him

Rent from the dead the redoubtable armor, wondrous to gaze on,  
Gift of the gods to Peleus the day thou wast wed to a mortal.  
Would thou hadst kept to thy place, with deathless sea-nymphs abiding,  
Aye, and Peleus kept his, and mortal woman had wedded!  
Now, to add to the measureless woes of this ill-sorted marriage,  
Never again will return to his home the son that is lost thee,  
Seeing my heart prompteth not that I live and abide with my fellows  
Save for the slaying of Hector in vengeance for fallen Patroklos."

Then spake Thetis again, and her tears fell fast as she answered: —  
"What thou art talking, my son, meaneth death, and short will thy shrift be!  
After the slaying of Hector thine own death followeth straightway."

"Straightway, then, may I die," Achilles bitterly answered,  
"Seeing I had not the grace to defend my friend at his slaying:



Far from his native land he died, and defender he  
had not.

Now, since I never return to mine own dear home,  
and in nowise

Either a light to Patroklos have been, nor the rest of  
my comrades

Strewn all over the field at the hands of sinewy  
Hector,

Nay, but here at the ships, to earth a profitless  
burden,

Sulked, albeit the greatest in fight of the mail-clad  
Achaians,

Oh that strife from earth and from heaven might ut-  
terly perish!

Aye, and hate, which proddeth to quarrel even the  
wise man —

Hate, which at first though sweeter by far than  
trickling honey,

Waxeth big till it rankles like smoke in the bosom of  
mortals —

Like to the hate which fired me of late against  
Agamemnon.

So, let by-gones be by-gones in spite of my just pro-  
vocation,

Curbing our passionate stirrings of heart from bitter  
compulsion.

Straight am I going to fall on the man who slew my  
beloved one,

Hector, and then meet death when Zeus and the gods  
shall decree it.

Even, yea, even great Herakles' might from death-  
doom escaped not,

Albeit dearest of mortals was he to almighty Kro-  
nion,

Nay, him fate overcame, and the merciless ven-  
geance of Hera.

So, too, will I, if in sooth a like fate for me is pre-  
paring,

Lie still when I am dead, but struggle for glory while  
living;

Let not thy fondness restrain me from war; thou  
wilt not persuade me."

Then spake Thetis, the silver-shod nymph, and an-  
swered him, saying: —

"Verily, child, this purpose of thine is good, and not  
evil,

Even thine hard-pressed comrades to save from utter  
destruction;

Still, thy bronze-gleaming armor is held by the Tro-  
jans, remember,

Worn as his own by crest-waving Hector. Nowise, I  
tell thee,

Nowise for long will he glory therein, for death is  
anigh him.

Therefore I bid thee in no wise to enter the tumults  
of Ares,  
Not till thou seest me hither returned: I will come  
with the sunrise,  
Bringing magnificent arms from the king of crafts-  
men, Hephaistos."

Speaking she turned from her son, and said to her  
sisters, the sea-nymphs: —  
"Down once again, my sisters, plunge down in the  
sea's broad bosom,  
Go to the halls of our father, the Ancient, and tell  
what betideth;  
I to lofty Olympos am going in hope that Hephaistos,  
Far-famed artist, will forge for my son magnificent  
armor."

Thus she spake, and the sea-nymphs turned and  
plunged in the billows.  
Thetis went on to Olympos, and, as she departed,  
the Argives  
Came with cries of dismay to their ships where the  
Hellespont dasheth.  
Chance there seemed to be none to rescue the corse  
of Patroklos,  
Seeing again with horses and men came furious  
onset

Led by Priamides Hector, — a flame of fire in his  
valor.

Thrice from behind by the foot it was seized by glo-  
rious Hector,

Eager to drag it away, and sharply he called to the  
Trojans;

Thrice the Aiases twain, y-clad in impetuous valor,  
Beat him off from the corse; but he, with self-confi-  
dent spirit

Ceased not assault, but sometimes he charged on the  
Danaans, sometimes

Halted with mighty yell, and gave not a moment of  
respite.

Drag him away he would, and have won unspeak-  
able triumph,

Saving that, down from Olympos, betimes came  
wind-footed Iris

Bringing word to Achilles to gird himself for the  
conflict.

Halting anigh, in wingèd words she spake to him,  
saying: —

“Rouse thyself, son of Peleus, of all mankind  
most undaunted!

Rise for Patroklos, for over him, now, is this terrible  
war-din

Rising in front of the ships; on both sides many are  
falling —

Danaans valiantly fighting to save the corse of the  
dead man,

Trojans and Hector to drag him away to Ilios wind-  
swept:

Up, then! Lie here no longer! Let shame sink  
deep in thy bosom!

Think of Patroklos becoming the prey to the dogs  
of the Trojans!

Thine will be the reproach if the body shall come to  
dishonor!"

Straightway, then, in reply, outspake swift-footed  
Achilles: —

"How can I join in the fray when foemen have cap-  
tured my armor?

Other man's arms I could even put on I know not of  
any,

Saving, perchance, the shield of great Telamonian  
Aias.

Aias himself, I trust, is making a stand with the fore-  
most,

Dealing death with the spear for the body of fallen  
Patroklos."

Wind-footed Iris replied: — "We know that thine  
armor is taken;

On to the trench notwithstanding, and show thyself  
to the Trojans,



Taking the chance that in terror of thee they will  
    pause from the onset,  
Thus to secure to the Danaans bold a respite to  
    breath in."

Now, when her message was told, and gone was  
    swift-footed Iris,  
Up rose Achilles, the gifted of Zeus; and Pallas  
    Athena  
Over his shoulders broad disposed a many-fringed  
    aegis,  
Also encircled his head with a golden cloud, and  
    above it  
Gleamed a flame which the goddess divine set bale-  
    fully blazing.  
Even as when from a city a smoke ascendeth to  
    heaven  
Far away on an island which hostile forces beleaguer,  
After they, all day long, have a losing fight from the  
    city  
Waged, and at set of sun their beacon-lights thickly  
    are blazing,  
Lighting the skies with their signal for aid from the  
    neighboring islands:  
So from the head of Achilles the glare ascended to  
    heaven.  
Heeding his mother's injunction the fighting Acha-  
    ians he joined not,

But, going forth to the moat, he stood and shouted,  
and Pallas

Lifted beside him her terrible voice, and unspeakable  
uproar

Rose in the Trojan ranks; for dire as the voice of a  
trumpet

Blown by its deadliest foes to summon a city's sur-  
render,

So, then, high o'er the tempest of war, blared the  
voice of Achilles.

Straightway the Trojans heard the bronzen voice  
of Achilles,

Thrilled and shaken of soul their high hearts quaked;  
and the horses,

Manes and tails all a-flying, and stricken with  
bodings of evil,

Headstrong, their chariots turned; and aghast were  
the charioteers,

Seeing the fire unwearied stream up from the head of  
Achilles,

Flaming its terrors, — the fire which keen-eyed  
Pallas had kindled.

Thrice from over the trench rang the mighty voice  
of Achilles,

Thrice on Trojan and valiant ally fell palsyng  
panic.

Such was the dire consternation that twelve of their  
best and their bravest

Fell by their own spears slain or their chariot wheels;  
and the Argives

Gladly, amid the confusion, the body of fallen  
Patroklos

Brought in, placed on a litter, and walked beside him  
lamenting.

In behind the procession Achilles fell, and amid them  
Wept hot tears unavailing; for, lo, his trusty com-  
panion

Stretched on the bier of death lay slain by pitiless  
spear-stroke —

Friend in the pomp of horses and chariots sent to  
the battle,

Hopefully sent, but, alas, to living welcome returned  
not.

Now the unwearying sun by ox-eyed imperial Hera  
Downward to eddying Ocean was sent, and loth he  
departed.

So, then, the sun went down, and gladly the warlike  
Achaians

Ceased from the perilous fight, — the tug and travail  
of battle.

Also, from further assault, the Trojans ceasing at  
sunset,

Loosed their steeds from the yoke and, before they  
bethought them of supper,

Met in assembly, but dared not to sit; and quaking  
they stood there,  
Seeing Achilles had come once again, who long had  
been absent.  
First amid them to speak was Polydamas, prudent  
in counsel,  
Wise beyond others in seeing the past and foreseeing  
the future.  
Comrade of Hector was he — 't was the self-same  
night they were born in —  
Yet was he greater in words, but Hector far greater  
in action.  
He, in concern for his people, forewarned and cau-  
tioned them, saying: —

“Weigh both sides of the question, my friends; I  
advocate strongly  
Instant retreat to the city, not wait for the dawn of  
the morning  
Here on the plain by the ships; and far, far away are  
our ramparts.  
Whilst our arch-enemy kept from the fray from hate  
of Atreides,  
Easier far were the Argives to face, and I by their  
shipping  
Bivouacked, hoping to take it by storm, and gloried  
as you did.

Now, as things are, I am sorely in dread of unflinching Achilles.

Such is the pride of his venturesome heart he will brook not to linger

Back in the plain, where the rest of us fight, we Trojans and Argives,

Sharing between us, as spoil, naught else than the fury of Ares, —

Nay, our city and wives, no less, is the prize he will fight for.

Up, then! back to the city! Oh, heed me! 'T will be as I tell you.

Now, ambrosial night restraineth his rage, but to-morrow

Granting he catcheth us loitering here in his armor of battle,

Some there be that will know him; and glad to win to the city

Whoso escapeth, and many be food for dogs and for vultures.

If, however, my word we shall heed, however reluctant,

Morning will find us in battle array with towers to defend us;

Worse for him will he find it to come from his shipping to fight us:

Back once more to his camp will he go with his high-headed horses



Blown by meanderings under our walls in his profit-  
less efforts.

Into our city he never will break, he dare not attempt  
it,

No, and he never will take it, — before that dogs  
shall devour him.”

Then, with an angry look, spake crest-waving Hector  
for answer: —

“Nowise welcome to me, Polydamas, runneth thy  
counsel,

Bidding us beat a retreat, and herd once more in the  
city.

Have we not had enough of being cooped in our  
fastness?

Once this city of Priam among all civilized peoples  
Used to be common talk for the bronze and gold that  
were in it, —

Now all utterly lost, and our homes despoiled of  
their treasures,

Many possessions to Phrygia gone and Maionia  
lovely,

Scattered and sold, since the hatred of Zeus hath been  
heavy upon us.

Now, when the son of mysterious Kronos the first  
time hath given us

Glory to win on the field, and in *their* camp herd the  
Achaians,

This is no time, thou fool, to vent such half-hearted  
counsels, —

Never a man of the Trojans will heed thee, — permit  
them I will not.

Come, now, the counsel that *I* give let every man of  
us follow:

First take supper all over the host, but take it in  
relays,

Keep strict watch, be alert, and to-morrow, keen for  
the onset,

Morning will find us in battle array by the enemies'  
shipping.

If, in truth, by the ships Achilles hath risen for  
action,

Worse for him will he find it if risen to stay; I shall  
never

Shrink from the roar of battle, but face to face will I  
meet him,

Whether he winneth a victory proud or I be the  
winner.

Fair-play giveth the war-god, and ofttimes slayeth  
the slayer."

Thus did Hector harangue, and the Trojans roared  
their approval —

Fools, bereft of their natural sense by Pallas Athena,  
Seeing their praise was for Hector albeit his counsel  
was evil,

Yet not a word of Polydamas heard, whose counsel  
had saved them.

So their supper they took the army throughout;  
but the Argives

Wailed for Patroklos the whole night long, and  
Achilles amid them

Led in the wail, with his man-slaying hands on the  
breast of his comrade,

Groaning grimly and fast, as bearded lioness growleth,  
One whose whelps hath a stag-hunter stolen and  
borne from the forest:

Later returning she mourneth, and scenting the  
tracks of the huntsman

Teareth through many a glen, sore wroth, and pant-  
ing to catch him:

So, with lion-like moanings, he spake to the Myrmi-  
dons, saying: —

“Empty, empty, alas, were my words so hopefully  
spoken,

Meant to hearten the hero Menoitios when we  
departed,

Promising I would return him his son in glory to  
Opus,

Proud of the capture of Troy, and rich in his share of  
the booty.

But, of the thoughts of men Zeus bringeth not all to  
fruition;

Lo, we both were foredoomed to dye this soil with our  
life-blood,

Here in Troyland, for not even me will the veteran  
Peleus

Welcome again in his halls — this soil shall hold me  
beneath it.

But, since, Patroklos, later than thee this earth will  
entomb me,

Funeral honors in thy case shall wait till I bring  
for thy glory

Head and armor of Hector, the mighty warrior that  
slew thee.

Till then, here by the ships thou shalt lie as thou  
art, and about thee

Deep-bosomed women of Troy and other Dardanian  
captives

Night-time and daytime shall stand and ceaselessly  
weep and bewail thee."

Silver-shod Thetis the while had come to the house  
of Hephaistos

Ever-enduring and starry, conspicuous mid the  
immortals,

Fashioned of bronze, and Hephaistos himself, the  
clubfoot, had made it.

Him she caught all reeking with sweat, and brisk at  
the bellows,

Hasting to finish a batch of tripods, twenty in number,

Forged to stand by the wall of the well-framed hall  
of his palace.

Wheels underneath them of gold he had set at the  
base of the tripods

Planning that they without help the divine assembly  
might enter,

Also return to the house without help, — a marvel  
to witness.

Just that near to completion were they, but thus far  
the cunning

Ears were not fastened: and these he was fitting, and  
cutting the rivets.

While he was working at these with the subtle skill  
of a craftsman,

Silver-shod Thetis drew nigh; and the beautiful  
wife of the artist,

Grace, in a glittering head-band, came out of the  
dwelling and saw her.

Taking her guest by the hand she greeted her cor-  
dially, saying: —

“What is the chance, fair Thetis, that bringeth thee  
hither to *our* house,

Guest ever honored and dear? Not often thy visits  
aforetime.

Prithee come in; as hostess I fain would set guest-  
cheer before thee.”



Thus she said, the goddess divine, and into the palace  
Led and seated her guest on a throne with trappings  
of silver,

Beautiful, skilfully wrought, and below for the feet  
was a foot-rest;

Then she went for her husband, the far-famed arti-  
san, saying: —

“Come, Hephaistos, Thetis is here, and wants you for  
something.”

Then, for answer, the club-foot renowned with feel-  
ing responded: —

“Verily, this is a guest that hath earned my homage  
and honor,

She who saved me from direful distress when falling  
from heaven,

Cast by my mother, unnatural vixen, meaning to  
keep me

Hid from sight, being lame; and I had been dashed  
to destruction

Saving that Thetis, Euryñomè helping her, caught  
me in season, —

That Euryñomè mean I the daughter of refluxent  
Ocean.

Staying with these years nine I wrought curiosities  
many,

Brooches, and twisted armlets, and necklaces also,  
and earrings,

Hid in a hollow grot; and about it the currents of Ocean  
Ever kept foaming and dashing with wild inarticulate murmur —

Refuge to all unknown, alike to gods and to mortals,  
Save that Euryñomè knew, and Thetis, the twain  
that had saved me.

Now she to *our* house hath come, and mighty constraint is upon me

Full life ransom to pay in requital to lovely-tressed  
Thetis.

Prithee do thou go back and provide her a bountiful  
guest-cheer,

Whilst I am stowing the bellows away, and all my  
utensils."

Speaking, he up from his anvil rose, a tottering giant,  
Rose with a limp, but the slender legs moved nimbly  
beneath him.

Then, apart from the fire his bellows he laid, and  
together

Gathered and stowed in a silver chest his working  
utensils;

Next, from his face and hands and his shaggy breast  
and his brawny

Neck he carefully sponged away the grime of the  
work-shop,

Then his tunic put on, a stout staff grasped, and proceeded

Forth with a limping gait; and, supporting their  
lord, tripped handmaids

Fashioned of gold, who yet were living maidens in  
semblance.

Understanding of heart have they, and articulate  
language,

Strength, moreover, and handicraft skill, the gift of  
immortals.

These, underneath their lord, supported his steps till  
he hobbled

On to the presence of Thetis, and sat in a glittering  
arm-chair,

Clasped her hand in his own, and heartily welcomed  
her, saying: —

“What is the errand, fair Thetis, that bringeth thee  
hither to *our* house,

Reverenced ever and dear? Not often thy visits  
aforetime.

Tell me the wish of thine heart; my spirit prompteth  
to do it,

If I am able, that is, and the thing be not utterly  
hopeless.”

Fair-robed Thetis then spake, and her tears fell fast  
as she answered: —

“Oh, Hephaistos, what goddess, of all who abide on  
Olympos,

Beareth such sorrows as Kronides Zeus for me hath  
appointed?

Me of the sea-nymphs all he subject made to a  
mortal,

Peleus, Aiakos' son, and I to his bride-bed sub-  
mitted

Albeit very unwilling; now worn in his palace he  
lieth

Stricken in years, — old sorrows from Zeus; now a  
new one he sendeth,

Seeing a son he decreed me to bear, and rear him to  
manhood,

Chivalry's very flower! The boy ran up like a  
sapling,

And, when grown like a sturdy stalk on the slope of a  
vineyard,

On to Troyland I sent him to war with the Trojans,  
and never,

Never shall welcome him back to his childhood's  
home a survivor.

Yea, and now while he liveth and seeth the sunlight  
he suffers

Woes I am powerless to help. The girl the Achaians  
awarded

King Agamemnon away from him took and, angered,  
Achilles

Pining for her, withdrew from the war, and the Tro-  
jans exultant

Hemmed the Achaians in camp; and now the elders  
of Argos

Sought for his aid, and the gifts that they promised  
were splendid and many.

As for himself he straitly refused to retrieve their  
disaster,

But, thereafter, Patroklos he sent when the ships were  
in danger,

Clad in his god-given armor, and many a Myrmidon  
with him.

All day long they fought by the Skaian Gates; and  
the city

Surely had fallen that self-same day, but Phoibos  
Apollo,

After great havoc done by the gallant son of Menoi-  
tios,

Slew him in front of the fray, and gave the glory to  
Hector.

So to thy knees am I come, and this is mine errand, to  
beg thee

Shield and helmet to give to my son so shortly to  
perish,

Also beautiful greaves with ankle-guards suitably  
fitted,

Likewise a corselet; the arms that were his his trusty  
companion

Lost when he fell; and heart-broken now in the dust  
is he lying.'



Then, for rejoinder, responded the far-famed artisan,  
saying: —

“Take heart! neither be troubled of soul respecting  
this armor!

Would that my craft were as able from death's dread  
cries to protect him,

Hiding him far apart when the last calamity com-  
eth,

Surely as glorious arms shall be his, to beholders a  
marvel.”

Thus said Hephaistos, and leaving her there, he went  
to his bellows.

These he turned on the fire, and set them to work;  
and the bellows,

Twenty in all, proceeded to blow on the crucibles,  
sending

Blasts of every description as wanted, where wanted,  
and sometimes

Fierce, when urgent the haste of the work, and other-  
wise sometimes,

All as Hephaistos might wish, and the needs of the  
calling demanded.

Bronze that wears not away, and tin, he placed on  
the fire,

Silver, also, and gold much prized of men; and his  
anvil

Huge he placed on the anvil block, and then in the  
one hand

Seized his ponderous hammer, his tongs being held  
by the other.

Then he made, to begin with, a shield that was  
mighty and massive,

Cunningly fashioned throughout, and shining metal  
about it

Cast in a triple rim, and fitted a shield-strap of  
silver.

Five were the plates of the shield with a common  
centre, and on it

Wrought he much curious work with the subtle skill  
of a craftsman.

On it the earth he wrought, and the sea, and on it  
the heavens,

Also the moon at her full, and the sun that wearieth  
never;

On it, moreover, the signs, as many as garland the  
heavens,

Even the Pleiads, the Hyads, the mighty hunter  
Orion,

Also the great she Bear, which men call also the  
Wagon,

Her that turneth on high and Orion eternally  
watcheth,

Her that alone of the signs shareth not in the baths  
of the ocean.

On it two cities he made of foreign and civilized  
peoples;

Things of beauty they were; in the one were wed-  
dings and feastings,

Brides led forth from their chambers, and under the  
splendor of torches

Up through the city escorted, while loud rose the  
song of espousal.

Whirling about in the dance were youths, and in  
time with the dancers

Flutes and viols rang high; and in front of the several  
houses

Standing in doorways were women admiring with  
open-mouthed wonder.

Yonder the men were met in assembly, for there  
had a trial <sup>1</sup>

Started, and there two men were disputing concern-  
ing the blood-price

Due for a man one had slain; he, claiming by gifts  
full atonement,

Stating his case to the people, while gifts were refused  
by the other;

<sup>1</sup> The first suggestion in literature of anything like a trial  
at law.

So both came to an expert determined to get a  
decision.

Both men the people applauded, for both sides had  
their adherents,

Keeping the heralds busy in checking the uproar;  
the elders

Sat there on polished stones in a sacred circle, and  
scepters

Held in their hands which in turn they received from  
the heavy-voiced heralds.

Then to the front they strode and judgment gave in  
succession.

Lying, as fit, in the midst was, also, of gold two  
talents,

Meant for him of the elders who fairest seemed in  
his judgment.

Camped by the second city were two beleaguering  
armies

Gleaming in mail, who offered the townsfolk this  
ultimatum —

Either the sack of the place or else an equal division  
'Twixt the besiegers and them of the wealth of the  
beautiful city.

This the townsfolk declined, and had armed them-  
selves for an ambush.

Up on the wall dear wives and infant children were  
standing,

Acting as guards, and men infirm of age were among them.

Forth marched the fighting men with Ares and Pallas Athena

Leading, both of gold, and gold was the raiment that clad them,

Both being stately and great in their mail as ever the gods are,

Towering apart by themselves, for the people below them were smaller.

They, when they came to a spot that was fitting to lay them in ambush —

Where, in a river's bed, was a place for watering cattle —

There they stationed themselves, as planned, in bright mail accoutered.

Two of their number apart lay hid, as scouts of the army,

Waiting for sheep to appear and trail-footed, crumpled-horned cattle.

Soon the cattle appeared, and behind them followed two herdsmen

Piping away on flutes, with never a thought of an ambush.

Thus the others saw first, and up they ran, intercepting

All the cattle and sheep, and slew the shepherds that fed them.



When the besiegers heard, as they sat by the places  
of parley,  
Outcry loud by the cattle, behind their high-stepping  
horses  
Promptly they mounted and followed, and came to  
the spot very quickly.  
Both sides stood their ground, and along by the banks  
of the river  
Fought a fight, and their bronze-shod spears drave  
hard at each other.  
Mingling among them was Strife, and Tumult, aye,  
Death was among them,  
Grasping a living man just wounded, another un-  
wounded,  
Also a dead man's corse by the feet through the mel-  
lay was dragging,  
Wearing a robe on her shoulders the blood of mortals  
had reddened.  
Even like living men they were rushing together and  
fighting,  
Like them were haling away the bodies of foemen  
departed.

On it a light-soiled field he placed, in high cultivation,  
Three times ploughed and wide; and many plough-  
men were in it  
Turning their yokes of oxen, and driving them for-  
ward and backward.

Some, as they turned about, having come to the  
    bounds of the plough-land,  
There had put in their hands a goblet of wine sweet  
    as honey,  
Giv'n by a man coming up; and others kept turning  
    the furrows,  
Eager to come to the goal of the loamy field in their  
    ploughing.  
Black was the field in the rear, and like to plough-  
    land exactly,  
Albeit being of gold ; and in this the work was a  
    wonder.

On it a royal demesne he set; and there were the  
    reapers  
Gathering in the grain, and keen-edged sickles  
    were handling.  
Some grain down to the ground in swaths was fall-  
    ing together,  
Some the binders of sheaves with straw were tying  
    in bundles.  
Sheaf-binders three stood by prepared for their work;  
    and behind them  
Boys, collecting the grain and bringing it forward in  
    armfuls,  
Kept the binders supplied; and the king, amid them,  
    in silence

Stood there, scepter in hand, and his heart at the  
swath was rejoicing.

Pages apart were preparing a banquet under an oak-  
tree,

Busied in dressing an ox, a monster, slaughtered;  
while women

Strewed it with barley meal, their supper to give to  
the reapers.

On it a vineyard he placed that was heavily loaded  
with clusters,

Beautiful, fashioned of gold, and black overhead  
were the bunches, —

Resting, moreover, throughout on props that were  
fashioned of silver.

Circling the vineyard a ditch of cyanus ran, and  
about it

Set he a fence of tin, and one path, only, led thither,  
Meant for the vintagers' use when they gathered the  
fruit of the vineyard.

Maidens, moreover, and youths were seen thereon  
making merry,

Bearing in plaited baskets the fruit of the vine sweet  
as honey.

Also, amid the throng, a boy with a clear-toned  
viol

Charmingly played, and sweetly the song of Sum-  
mer departing

Sang with a high-pitched voice; and the rest in step  
altogether  
Followed with skipping feet in time with the song  
and the music.

On it, moreover, a herd he embossed of high-horned  
cattle,  
Fashioned of gold and of tin; and lowing they ran  
from the farmyard  
Down to a mead by a murmuring stream where  
rushes were waving.  
Shepherds of gold to the number of four were driving  
the cattle,  
Followed by nine swift dogs; and lo, two terrible  
lions  
Seized on a bull that was leading, and dragged him  
bellowing loudly.  
Close in pursuit were the dogs and the men but, re-  
gardless, the lions,  
Rending the hide of the bull, were gorging them-  
selves on his entrails.  
Sore afraid were the shepherds, but set the dogs to  
attack them.  
They swerved away from the lions and, prudently  
keeping their distance,  
Came up behind them and barked, but refrained  
altogether from biting.

On it a pasture he made, did the far-famed clubfoot,  
a wide one,  
All in a beautiful glen, and white-fleeced sheep were  
within it,  
Steadings, moreover, for shepherds, and low-roofed  
huts, and the sheep-folds.

On it a dance he embossed, did the far-famed god,  
Ambidexter,  
Such as in Crete, in the olden time, of intricate  
mazes  
Daidalos deftly designed for its princess, fair  
Ariadne.  
There represented were youths and maidens costly of  
wooing,  
Dancing, with all hands joined, each holding the  
wrist of his partner.  
Raiment of fine-spun linen the maids had on, while  
in tunics  
Neatly woven the youths were clad, dim gleaming  
with olive;  
Also beautiful garlands bedecked the maids, while  
the others  
Daggers of gold were wearing suspended from bal-  
dries of silver.  
Now with cadenced steps they nimbly moved in a  
circle,



Easily very, as when, in the practiced hands of a  
potter,  
Spinneth his wheel as he sitteth to see if it runneth  
in order;  
Then, with change in the step, in lines they chased  
one another.  
Throngs of spectators stood by to gaze at the beautiful dancing,  
Full of delight; and amid them a god-like poet was  
singing,  
Playing the while on his harp; and down through  
the throng of spectators  
Ever in time with the music two acrobats deftly  
were whirling.

On it, he placed moreover, the mighty power of the  
Ocean,  
Streaming about on the rim of the targe so skilfully  
fashioned.

Now when the work was complete on the shield so  
mighty and massive,  
Forged he a corselet to match it, and brighter than  
fire was its glitter.  
Forged he also a helmet, 'twas heavy and shaped to  
the temples,

Beautiful, cunningly made, and a crest of gold set  
above it:

Forged he, moreover, greaves of flexible tin for the  
outfit.

Now when the suit of armor was finished by great  
Ambidexter,

Bringing it forward he laid it adown by the feet of  
the mother.

Swift as the flight of the falcon she sped down snowy  
Olympos

Bearing the glittering arms, the gift of craftsman  
Hephaistos.

## BOOK XIX

DAWN in her mantle of saffron arose from the  
streams of the Ocean,  
Bearing her light, betimes, to deathless gods and to  
mortals,  
When to the ships came Thetis anon with arms from  
Hephaistos.  
There her own dear son outstretched by the side of  
Patroklos  
Found she weeping aloud, and his many companions  
about him  
Joined in lament; and amid them stole close the  
beauteous goddess,  
Clasped his hands in her own, and said in tender  
remonstrance: —

“We must submit, my child, though sad for the  
death of thy comrade,  
Seeing the gods so willed, and he fell foredoomed  
from the outset.  
Here, take these, the work of Hephaistos, magnificent  
armor,  
Such as no mortal man ever wore on his shoulders  
before this.”

Such were the words of the goddess as down in front  
of Achilles

Laid she the arms, which resounded in all their curious  
markings.

Then on the Myrmidons all fell trembling, neither  
did any

Dare to look at it straight, and they turned to flee;  
but Achilles

Gazed, and ever grew fierce as he gazed, and under  
his eyebrows

Dread was the glare of his eyes which gleamed like  
the blaze of a fire;

Yet with delight did he handle the glorious gifts  
notwithstanding.

When he had sated his soul with beholding the curious  
tracings,

Straightway he turned, and in wingèd words thus  
spake to his mother: —

“Mother, god-given armor is this, and such as is fitting  
Work of immortals should be, and mortal hand could  
not forge them.

Now, good sooth, will I arm for the fray:” and he  
sped up the sea-shore,

Shouting his terrible war-cry, and roused the heroic  
Achaians.

Even those who aforetime were wont to abide by the  
shipping,

Men, for example, like helmsmen who guided the  
oarage for steering,

Also such as were stewards and dealt out food to the  
soldiers,

Even these men came then to assembly, seeing  
Achilles

Now had appeared, who for long stood aloof from  
dolorous battle.

Limping, along came two men together, servants of  
Ares,

Even Tydeides the dauntless in fight, and godlike  
Odysseus,

Leaning upon their spears, for still their wounds  
were distressing;

Yet, to the front they passed, and seated themselves  
in assembly.

Last of all to arrive was the king of men, Agamemnon,  
Crippled by spear-wound inflicted by Koön, son of  
Antenor.

In trooped man after man till gathered were all the  
Achaians,

When, amid them Achilles arose, and spake to them,  
saying: —

“Pray, Atreides, wherein hath it turned out better  
for either,

Either for thee or for me, that with hearts pervert  
we have fallen



Into a quarrel heart-rending as this, and all for a  
woman?

She, ah, would she by Artemis slain had died at the  
shipping,

Even the self-same day that I stormed Lyrnessos  
and took it!

Then, not so many Achaians had bitten the dust in  
their death-throes,

Slain by the hands of our foes whilst I was sulking in  
anger.

Profit to Hector, indeed, and the Trojans it was; but  
Achaians

Long will remember this quarrel of ours, I ween, and  
with reason.

Come, let the dead past bury its dead; necessity bids  
us

Curb the pride of our hearts, our stormy souls not-  
withstanding.

My wrath here I renounce, and sincerely: nowise  
doth honor

Force me to end not this quarrel forever. Up,  
then, and order

Instant advance of the Argives to war! I fain would  
determine

Whether the Trojans keep on camping here: but  
methinks that the remnant,

Such as escape from my spear, will take to their heels,  
and be glad to."

Thus he said, and his hearers rejoiced that the quarrel  
was ended.

Then rose King Agamemnon and spake to the Dana-  
ans, saying: —

“Listen, friends, ye Danaan heroes, ye servants of  
Ares,

Give your attention, all, though my words are meant  
for Achilles.

Many a word respecting our feud have the Danaans  
spoken —

Every man hath denounced me; but not on me should  
the blame rest,

Nay, it was Zeus, and Fate, the Avenger that walk-  
eth in darkness,

They it was who put in my heart wild infatuation  
When, on that fatal day, I wrested his prize from  
Achilles.

What could I do, being man, and the great gods  
governing all things?

Eldest daughter of Zeus is Folly, who all men be-  
guileth,

Temptress accursèd! soft are her feet; rough earth  
she avoideth,

Nay, but on heads of men she lightly presseth her  
footsteps,

Spreading her snares of bane, and this man and that  
she entangleth.

Why, by her once on a time was Zeus befooled,  
though acknowledged  
Greatest of gods and men; but him, notwithstanding  
his greatness,  
Hera, with feminine craft, deceived on the day when  
the mighty  
Herakles should have been born, in tower-crowned  
Thebes, of Alkménè.  
Downright boastful was he as he said amid the im-  
mortals: —

“Hearken to me, ye gods, and all ye goddesses  
hearken:  
This is the day Eileithýa who helpeth women in  
childbirth  
Unto the light shall a man-child bring of *my* blood  
descended  
Who as a monarch shall reign over all the dwellers  
about him.’

“Then, with craft in her heart, responded imperial  
Hera: —  
‘Thou wilt prove a deceiver, nor bring thy word  
to fulfilment.  
Come, now, Olympian, swear me the oath that can-  
not be broken,  
He shall, indeed, be king over all the dwellers about  
him,

Whoso in birth this day shall fall 'twixt the feet of  
a woman,  
Being of human kind, and from thee directly descended.'

"Thus she spake; and Zeus, in no wise suspecting  
beguilement,  
Swore her the mighty oath, and in that was very  
short-sighted.

Hera at once hurried off and, leaving the peak of  
Olympos,  
Came to Achaian Argos at tearing pace, where she  
haply  
Knew of the beauteous wife of Sthenelos, offspring of  
Perseus.

She was with child of a son, with the seventh month  
just at beginning.

Him to the light of day brought Hera, child born  
untimely,

While, from Alkménè, she hindered the birth, restraining the Midwives.

Then she herself made announcement to Zeus Kronion in this wise: —

"Zeus, dread lord of the lightning, a piece of news  
will I bring thee:

Born is that man-child already to rule o'er the Argives, a fine one,

Even Eurystheus, Sthenelos' son, descendant of  
Perseus,  
Thine own stock, — not unfitting to reign as king  
of the Argives.'

"Thus she said; and his inmost heart was smitten  
with anguish.

Bitterly heartsore and wroth he straightway Folly,  
the Temptress,

Seized by the hair of the head, and the oath that  
cannot be broken

Swore, that cozening Folly should never return to  
Olympos.

Whirling her round by the hair when the oath was  
spoken, he cast her

Down from the starry heavens; and such was her  
coming to mortals;

Yet did she cost Zeus many a pang, his son seeing  
later

Bound to unseemly toil in his labors at hest of Eurys-  
theus.

Even so I, when I saw great crest-waving Hector  
before me

Slaying the Argives, the Temptress forgat not who  
first had betrayed me.

But, since befooled I was, and Zeus of my reason  
bereft me,



Full amends am I ready to render, and penalty  
priceless.

Up, then! on to the battle! in spirit the rest of the  
army.

Gifts all told I am ready to give, as noble Odysseus  
Yesternight promised; and if thou art willing, though  
eager for battle,

Wait, and pages shall bring thee the gifts, to prove  
they content thee."

Achilles is impatient of delay; but Odysseus reminds him  
that the army must breakfast before fighting, and that  
it is better that the gifts be delivered publicly and  
Agamemnon take the promised oath. Agamemnon  
assents, and commissions Odysseus to be master of cere-  
monies, and bids Talthybios provide a boar for sacrifice.

Straightway, as soon as was spoken the word, the  
deed was accomplished.

Forth from the camp of Atreides they bore seven  
tripods, as promised,

Also horses twelve, and twenty glittering cauldrons;  
Forth they hurrying brought the dames in handi-  
work skilful,

Seven, and fair-cheeked Briseis the eighth; and care-  
ful Odysseus

Weighed ten talents of gold and, taking it, led the  
procession

Back with the gifts to the public assembly; and, up  
Agamemnon

Rose, and beside him Talthybios stood with voice  
of immortals,  
Holding the boar; and, drawing his sheathknife of  
iron, Atreides  
Bristles clipped from the head, and with hands up-  
lifted to heaven  
Prayed unto Zeus; and all the Achaians in silence  
about him  
Sat in order and listened with awe, while thus spake  
Atreides: —

“First let Zeus be my witness, the highest and best  
of immortals,  
Aye, and the Sun, and Earth, and the stern Avengers  
who punish  
Reprobate men in the world below who swear to a  
falsehood,  
Never a hand have I laid on the girl Briseis, nay,  
neither  
Sharing her bed, and in no wise — she staid at my  
quarters unsullied.  
If, in this, I am false, may the gods grant sorrow on  
sorrow.”

Thus he said; and lifting the knife that knoweth not  
pity,  
Cut the throat of the boar; and Talthybios whirled  
it, and cast it

Into the fathomless sea's wild waste, as food for  
the fishes.

Then Achilles arose, and spake to the Danaans,  
saying: —

“Verily, Zeus, thou givest to man vast infatuations!  
Never had King Agamemnon so rankled the soul in  
my bosom,  
Never had taken my damsel despite me, unrecking  
the issue,  
Saving that Zeus <sup>1</sup> so-willed, meaning death to many  
Achaians.  
Now, then, hurry for breakfast, and get yourselves  
ready for battle.”

Suiting action to word he quickly dissolved the  
assembly.  
Scattering each to his ship they departed; the Myr-  
midons straightway  
Turned to the gifts, and bore them away to the ship  
of Achilles.

<sup>1</sup> The reader will recall that Zeus only took sides in the quarrel twelve days after it occurred, and then most reluctantly; but there is human nature in the agreement of both parties that the gods were responsible for their folly:

“Adam began it at the tree:  
The woman that Thou gavest me.”

These they deposited well in the camp, there seated  
the women,  
Then the horses were driven by the squires where  
horses were herded.

Now when Briseis, returning as fair as bright Aphro-  
ditè,  
Saw before her the spear-mangled form of lifeless  
Patroklos,  
Loud were her wails as she fell on the body in out-  
burst of sorrow,  
Wildly tearing her beauteous face, her neck, and her  
bosom.  
Fair in her tears as a goddess is fair she mournfully  
murmured: —

“O Patroklos, to me in my wretchedness kindest of  
all men!  
How to me, and forever, hath evil succeeded to evil!  
Husband, to whom my father and loving mother  
had given me,  
Saw I spear-torn and slain in front of our city, Lyr-  
nessos;  
Also my brethren three — ’twas the selfsame mother  
that bore us —  
Dear ones, alongside my husband, by day of their  
doom overtaken.

Yet, even then, when my husband was slain by  
mighty Achilles,  
Then when the city of Mynes, my native city, was  
wasted,  
E'en in calamity's face thou soughtest, Patroklos,  
to cheer me,  
Saying the wedded wife I should be of godlike  
Achilles,  
Even be taken to Phthia and wedded with Myrmidon  
honors.  
Therefore I weep thee, unceasingly weep, thou com-  
passionate always."

Thus she spake in her tears, and the women joined  
in her moaning,  
Each for her own sad past, intermingled with grief  
for Patroklos.

#### THE ACHAIANS AND ACHILLES PREPARE FOR BATTLE

Thick as the snowflakes of Winter come fluttering  
down from the heavens,  
Frosty, and driven by the blast of the Northwind,  
child of the ether,  
So thick, then, were the helmets, the shields, the  
spears, and the breastplates,



Streaming all bright from the ships; and the splendor  
mounted to heaven,

Yea, and the whole earth laughed with the lightning  
gleam, and it thundered

Under the tread of the soldiers; and mid them  
Achilles was arming.

First his greaves he put on, to his ankles fastened  
with silver,

Then his breastplate assumed, and his sword slung  
over his shoulders;

Next he lifted his shield, like the full-orbed moon in  
its brightness.

Even as over the sea a light appeareth to sailors,  
Light from a fire on a hill-top high in the hut of a  
shepherd,

While, away from their friends, they are driven to  
sea by a tempest,

So from the shield of Achilles the splendor rose to  
the ether.

Then his helmet with horse-hair crest he donned —  
it was massive —

Thickly set as a horse-mane with golden threads  
by Hephaistos.

Lo, it gleamed like a star! His father's spear from  
the spear-case

Lastly he drew; it was heavy — no other Achaian  
could wield it

Saving Achilles alone — the ash-spear given to Peleus,

Cut by Cheiron on Pelion's peak, a destruction to  
heroes.  
Then Automedon, Alkimus helping him, harnessed  
the horses,  
Buckled about them the beautiful straps, adjusted  
the bridles,  
Stretching behind them the reins to the chariot  
strong. As he mounted  
Whip in hand, behind him Achilles stepped, in his  
armor  
Blazing as blazeth the sun in his midday course, and  
in this wise  
Sharply upbraided the horses — the god-given horses  
of Peleus: —

“Xanthos and Balios both, Podargè's glorious  
children,  
Be ye otherwise minded to bring your master in  
safety  
Back to the Danaan host when the battle ceaseth,  
not leave him  
Lying dead on the field as ye left unhappy Patroklos.”

Then, from under the yoke, spake Xanthos, swift-  
footed war-horse —  
Suddenly gifted with speech by white-armed Hera,  
the goddess —

Bowing the while his head; and all his mane from  
the cushion  
Crept out down by the yoke and swept the earth,  
as he answered: —

“Verily, yet for a time will we save thee, mighty  
Achilles,  
Yet is the day of thy doom hard by thee, in waiting;  
nor blame ye  
Us as the cause, but a god of might, and fate over-  
powering.  
Not by reason of slowness nor other remissness of  
ours

Tore the Trojans the mail from the shoulders of  
fallen Patroklos,  
No, but a god of the highest, the son of lovely-haired  
Leto,  
Slew him in front of the fray, and gave the glory to  
Hector.  
We twain even might speed like a blast of blustering  
Zephyr —  
Swiftest, they say, of winds — but the hoof-beats of  
fate are behind thee!  
Here, thou also must fall, and a god and a mortal  
shall slay thee.”

Thus much Xanthos disclosed when speech the  
Avengers denied him.

Swayed by bitter emotion Achilles said in rejoinder: —

“Xanthos, wherefore to me my death foretell? It is  
needless.

Well I know of myself that here my doom shall o’er-  
take me,

Far from father and mother dear; yet falter I will not,  
No, nor withhold my hand till Troy hath a surfeit  
of fighting.”

Then, as his war-shout rang, to the battle-field  
thundered the horses.

## BOOK XXII <sup>1</sup>

PANTING like fear-stricken fawns the Trojans who  
won to the city  
Once and again were drinking to quench the thirst  
that consumed them,  
Then on the parapet stood for coolness; but, anxious  
no longer,  
On toward the wall the Danaans marched with  
shields on their shoulders.  
Front of the Skaian Gates, outside the city, was Hector  
Chained, as it were, to the spot, for fate accursèd  
constrained him.  
Then to Achilles, still sharp in pursuit, spake Phoibos  
Apollo: —

<sup>1</sup> The omitted books, XX and XXI, are confessedly below the general standard of the Iliad, and very little in either appears to be part of the original story. To maintain the connection it is only necessary for the reader to know that Achilles wins a signal victory. He divides the Trojan forces, and one part he drives toward the river and slays many; but when he turns upon the other part who are fleeing to the city, Apollo fires Agenor to meet him in single fight; and when he has thus distracted the attention of Achilles snatches Agenor away, and himself takes the form of the latter, and pretends to flee in the opposite direction just beyond the reach of Achilles, who wastes his time in vain pursuit. When Book XXII opens Achilles has not yet discovered his mistake.



“Wherefore, thou son of Peleus, thy swift feet tire  
in pursuing —  
Thou who art mortal still following me, a god and  
immortal?  
Thou dost not know me that I am a god, and art mad  
altogether!  
Feeble advantage thou tak'st of the sorry plight of  
the Trojans!  
They are escaped to the city while vainly thou dog-  
gest my footsteps.  
Me thou wilt slay not, try as thou mayest; perish I  
cannot.”

Bitterly wroth was Achilles, who straightway an-  
swered him, saying: —  
“Thou hast befooled me, Far-Worker, of all the gods  
most accursèd,  
Guilefully turning me here from the wall by thy  
witchcraft; otherwise many,  
Many a Trojan had bitten the dust ere he entered  
the city.  
So, of the fruits of my victory earned I am cheated;  
them thou hast rescued  
Easy of heart, since nowise thou darest my ven-  
geance hereafter.  
Vengeance I surely would take if power to mete it  
were in me.”

Thus he said in the pride of his heart, and was gone  
to the city,  
Speeding as speedeth a horse, a winner of chariot  
races,  
When, at a furious pace, it stretcheth away on the  
race-course;  
Even so swiftly Achilles plied feet and knees to the  
city.

First of all was the eye of the old man, Priam, to see  
him  
Dashing across the plain, and blazing as Sirius blazeth,  
Star which cometh at harvest tide and, peerless in  
glory,  
Paleth the myriad stars as darkness deepens at night-  
fall,  
Star which for second name men call the "Dog of  
Orion."  
Brightest, brightest is he, yet is set for an omen of  
evil —  
Fever and death is the harvest he beareth to shud-  
dering mortals:  
Ominous, thus, was the glare of the arms of on-coming  
Achilles.

Crazed at the sight the old man groaned, and in wild  
apprehension  
Shrieked to his son his entreaties; for Hector in front  
of the gateway

Stood with resolute heart, determined to fight with  
Achilles.

Lifting his hands in pathetic appeal the old man  
besought him: —

“Hector, stay not to face, dear son, this man single-  
handed,

One who is mightier far, lest thy end be certain and  
speedy,

Merciless! would he were dear to the gods as to me,  
and no more so, -

Then were he dead on the field, and dogs and kites  
would devour him —

Then would the ache of my heart have some of its  
misery lessened.

Think of my many sons he hath slain or sold into  
bondage!

Even now two of my children, Lykáon and young  
Polydoros,

I am not able to see mid the men got back to the city!  
If, indeed, they be dead, gone down to the mansions  
of Hades,

Grief will it be to my soul, and grief to the mother  
who bare them,

Yet to the rest of the people the pain will be little  
enduring —

Little so thou diest not, cut off by the hand of  
Achilles.

Come, now, enter the wall, dear son, and be the  
preserver  
Both of the men and the women of Troy, nor cover  
Achilles  
Over with glory, thyself and thy sweet life being the  
forfeit.  
Pity thy father, the aged, yet instinct with fore-  
sight and feeling,  
Ill-starred, doomed by Kronides Zeus to be slain,  
and my footsteps  
Leave life's ultimate threshold my last sights visions  
of horror,  
Sons being slain, my daughters and sons' wives  
dragged into bondage,  
Infant children dashed to the earth in the fury of  
carnage.  
Desolate chambers behind me, at last, in front of  
my doorway  
Dogs of ravin will tear me dead, dogs fed at my  
table  
Maddened by drinking my blood, when soul is parted  
from body  
Slain by a ruthless hand. With young men all  
things are seemly,  
Even when dead on the field with sword-cuts gashed  
and with spear-thrusts;  
But, when an old man dead, gray-headed, gray-  
bearded and shrunken,

Dogs dishonor his body in hideous nakedness  
lying —

That is the ghastliest fate that befalleth suffering  
mortals.”

Thus he said, and from hoary head in agonized  
passion

Tore off the whitened hair, but moved not the spirit  
of Hector.

Next, his mother, her tears streaming down, with  
pitiful moanings

Bared her bosom with one hand, the breasts upraised  
with the other,

Then, in tears, and in wingèd words, appealed to  
him, saying: —

“Hector, reverence these, my child, if in infancy  
ever

I by this breast have nursed thee to sleep, and pity  
thy mother.

Think of it, darling child, and inside the walls of the  
city

Baffle this ruthless foe, not stand sole fighter against  
him.

Merciless man! should he slay thee, not I, the mother  
who bare thee

Ever would weep at thy funeral bier, thou flower of  
my children,



No, nor thy hardly-won wife; but far, very far from  
thy kindred,  
Dead at the Argive ships vile dogs will haste to  
devour thee."

Thus with crying and tears they besought, but Hector  
they moved not,  
Stedfast of heart to remain and face gigantic  
Achilles.

Like as a snake in his mountain haunt, full-fed upon  
poisons,

Faceth intruder's approach, and, swelling with  
furious anger,

Meets him with baleful stare all coiled for a spring in  
the snake-den,

So, with purpose unshaken, stood Hector, instant  
for conflict,

Leaning against his spear by a jutting tower of the  
gateway.

Stirred by bitter reflections his proud heart pondered  
in this wise: —

"Woe is to me if I enter the gates, though walls be  
my shelter!

First will Polydamas taunt me, who urged me to  
march to the city

During that fatal night when Achilles woke to the  
conflict;

Yet I heeded him not, and 'twere better far had I  
heeded.

Now that the army is lost, and my own rash folly  
hath lost it,

Shamed in sight of the Trojans, the mute reproach  
of her women,

People less daring than I am hereafter will speak of  
me, saying: —

'Hector relied on his strength, and his rashness cost  
us the army.'

Thus will they say, and with truth; and for me it  
were manifold better

Man against man to slay him, and make my return  
as a victor,

Or, after glorious fight, to die in front of the city.

What if I part with my shield, lay aside my spear and  
my helmet,

Go meet Achilles unarmed, and promise to give the  
Atreidai

Helen and all the possessions brought hither by  
prince Alexander —

All that was cause of the war — and also divide in  
addition

All that the city containeth, confirmed by vote of the  
elders

Not to conceal one thing, but make an equal division —

Nay, these are dreams, unsubstantial, no time to  
give way to such fancies!

Granted I went with proposals like these, unarmed  
as a woman,  
He would slay me I know, with neither respect nor  
compassion.  
He is no amorous nymph, not born of a rock nor an  
oak-tree,  
One to be wooed and won over as swain payeth court  
to a maiden,  
After the manner of maiden and swain paying court  
to each other.  
Better, in different sort, right now rush together in  
combat,  
Learning to which of the twain the Olympian victory  
giveth."

Thus he waited and mused, and lo, Achilles was on  
him,  
Awful as Ares the war-god, the death-dealing shaker-  
of-helmets,  
Brandishing over his shoulder the spear of Peleus  
his father  
Poised and portentous; and round him the bronze-  
glint sheen of his armor  
Flamed like a blazing fire, or the sun as it riseth in  
splendor.  
Fear gat hold of Hector beholding; longer he dared not  
Keep to his place, he abandoned the gates, and was  
off in a panic.

Hotly Achilles pursued, secure in the pride of his  
    swiftness.

Just as the hawk of the mountains, the creature that  
    flyeth the swiftest,

Darteth with easy grace in pursuit of a timorous  
    pigeon,

She underneath in the terror of flight; and he, scream-  
    ing sharply,

Ofttimes pounceth adown, and his heart is bent on  
    the capture;

So straight at him Achilles was flying, and Hector in  
    terror

Fled neath the Trojan walls, and plied his knees to the  
    utmost.

They, along by the lookout. along by the breezy  
    wild-fig tree,

Ever from under the wall, and down by the wagon-  
    road dashing,

Came to the fountains, the fair-flowing twain; and  
    there were the sources

Twain upspringing from earth to feed the swirling  
    Skamander.

One of the two was flowing with water warm, and  
    about it

Steam was spreading therefrom as smoke from the  
    flame of a fire;

Cold the water the other was running, — cold as a  
    hailstone,

Cold as the driven snow, or water hardened to crystal.  
There, too, close by these, were broad tanks, beautiful stonework,  
Where, in the days of peace ere the Argives compassed the city,  
Troy's fair wives and her daughters once washed their glistening raiment.  
By, by these they ran, one fleeing, the other pursuing,  
Both at a tearing pace; for neither for victim nor bull's-hide  
Toiled they — the usual prize men offer for winning a footrace —  
No, but the stake of the race was the life of chivalrous Hector.  
Even as rounding a goal the prize-winning storm-footed horses  
Sweep at a mighty pace, and a mighty prize lieth ready,  
Either a tripod or woman, at funeral games of a hero,  
So, now, thrice did the twain encircle the city of Priam  
Borne by their hurrying feet; and all the gods were beholding.  
First of them all to speak was the father of men and immortals,  
Saying, "Ah me, it grieves me to see a man so beloved



Fleeing for life round the wall; my heart is heavy for  
Hector

Who, on the summits of Ida as well as the heights of  
the city

Failed not to burn in mine honor fat haunches of  
oxen; for all that

Now with relentless foot is he hunted to death by  
Achilles.

Come now, consider, ye gods, and determine whether  
to save him,

Or, is his time now come, and Achilles appointed to  
slay him?"

Then, for answer, responded the goddess, bright-  
eyed Athena: —

"Sire of the lightning gleam, cloud-darkener, wild  
is thy saying!

Being a mortal man, and his doom-day long ago  
settled,

Would'st thou, his course now run, from the death-  
shadow back again snatch him?

Do it; but know that the rest of the gods are all  
disapproving."

Then for rejoinder responded dread Zeus who  
darkeneth heaven: —

"Cheer up, Tritogeneia, my daughter, seeing I spoke  
not

Owing to settled resolve, and to thee would fain be  
indulgent.

All that thy heart may prompt thee to do, do it,  
nothing withholding."

Thus he said, and incited Athena who needed no  
urging;

So, on her errand of death, she dashed down the  
heights of Olympos.

Then, with relentless foot was Hector pressed by  
Achilles.

Even as dog, having stirred from its covert the fawn  
of a deer,

Driveth it sharply through winding dells and glens  
of a mountain,

And, though it seeketh escape and hideth itself in  
the thickets,

Yet keepeth tracking him out, and runneth unceas-  
ing, and finds him;

Even so Hector escaped not the eye of wary Achilles.  
Often as he might essay to reach the Dardanian gate-  
way,

Often to turn him aside as he came by the towers of  
the rampart,

Hoping his friends from above would impede Achilles  
with missiles,

Just so often the latter with quick prevision would  
turn him

Back once more to the plain, and himself kept the  
path next the city.

Even as one in a dream of being pursued or pursuing  
Never can scape from the danger behind, nor catch  
the pursued one,

Even so neither could gain on his foe, nor pursued  
nor pursuer.

Thus would Hector have scaped from o'ershadowing  
death altogether

Only that now was the last, the very last time that  
Apollo

Stood anigh to his aid, and quickened his knees and  
his spirit,

Seeing Achilles by nod of the head had warned the  
Achaians,

Neither allowed them to cast any pestilent arrows  
at Hector,

Fearing that some one might hit him, and he at the  
slaying be second.

But, when the hurrying twain for the fourth time  
came to the fountains,

Right then Zeus, the All-father, his golden balances  
poising,

Placed two fates in the opposite scales, of death, the  
destroyer,

One of Achilles, the other of Hector, tamer-of-horses,

Holding the beam by the middle; and sealed was the  
death-doom of Hector,  
His scale sinking to Hades, — and Phoibos Apollo  
forsook him.

Then to the side of Achilles, the goddess, bright-eyed  
Athena,  
Came, and in light-flitting words she said as she  
halted anigh him:

“Sure are my hopes this day for both of us, mighty  
Achilles,  
Even to bear to the ships a victory great for the  
Argives,  
Hector being our spoil, albeit he battle untiring.  
Longer he cannot escape us, no, not if far-darting  
Apollo  
Weep, and grovel, and beg great Zeus who wieldeth  
the aegis.  
Stand thou here, nothing more, and get breath; to  
go after this fellow  
I will take on myself, and beguile him to manful en-  
counter.”

Thus said Athena. Achilles complied, and with  
inward elation  
Halted as bid, and leaned on his spear bronze-pointed  
and ashen.  
She, then leaving him there, went on and overtook  
Hector,

Shape and untiring voice of his brother, Deïphobos,  
taking.

Nigh him she drew, and in wingèd words, deluded  
him, saying: —

“Brother, right sorely, I trow, hath mighty Achilles  
beset thee,

Chasing thee time after time all round the city of  
Priam.

Come, let us stand our ground, together abiding his  
onset.”

Then to Athena, for answer, replied great crest-  
waving Hector: —

“Dearest of brethren by far, Deïphobos, wert thou  
aforetime,

Even of all the sons to Hekabè born and to Priam.

Even more yet I honor thee now, who ventured for  
my sake

Forth to come from the wall while the rest stay  
skulking behind it.”

Then for rejoinder responded the goddess, bright-  
eyed Athena: —

“Brother, 'tis true that father and mother and all  
of our kindred

Begged and besought me one after another to stay  
in the city.



Awful as that is the panic, and all are quaking with  
terror:

Yet the heart in my breast was too troubled, seeing  
thy danger.

Now for a dash, and a man-to-man fight, and no  
sparing of spears!

Let us find out if Achilles can finish us both, and our  
armor

Bear as a spoil to the ships, or *thy* spear end his pre-  
sumption."

Such was her talk; and misled by her guile he fol-  
lowed Athena.

When they had drawn anigh as they came to meet  
one another,

First of the twain to speak to his foe was crest-waving  
Hector: —

"Longer I fear thee not, son of Peleus, e'en as afore-  
time

Thrice round the city of Priam I fled, avoiding thy  
onset.

Otherwise now is my purpose, to stand and slay thee,  
or perish.

First let us call on the gods to witness and safeguard  
our compact.

I will agree no unseemly abasement to do to thy  
body,

Should I prevail, and slay thee, and Zeus maketh  
me the survivor;  
No, but when I have taken thy glorious armor,  
Achilles,  
Then will I give to the Argives thy body; promise  
thou likewise."

Grim was the look of Achilles as fiercely he answered  
him, saying: —  
"Hector, talk not to me, thou madman, of compacts  
between us:  
Never have lions and men made truce or mutual  
pledges,  
Neither do wolves and lambs have hearts in unison  
beating,  
No, but mischief imagine unceasing, one to the  
other;  
So 'twixt us is no love lost, nor chance for mutual  
pledges,  
Not till one of us fall, and his blood glut Ares, the  
war-god.  
Call to thine aid every spark of thy manhood; bit-  
terly need'st thou  
Prove thee a spearman true, a warrior stout and  
unblenching,  
Further escape is there none, for Pallas Athena hath  
doomed thee

Under my spear to fall; and payment in full shalt  
thou render  
Now for my comrades slain when thy spear raged  
madly in battle."

So, on ceasing, he levelled and threw his long-shad-  
owed spear.  
Hector, seeing it come, crouched down and avoided  
the spear-cast;  
Over his head it flew, and was fixed in the earth;  
but Athena  
Snatched it forth and returned it; and, nowise seeing  
it, Hector  
Said to his matchless foe, "Thy spear hath missed  
me, Achilles,  
Neither from Zeus wast thou ware of my fate, though  
loudly thou saidst it.  
Nay, thou art clever of speech, and thy words are  
crafty and thievish,  
Meant to make me afraid, and steal from me courage  
and valor.  
Hope not that I shall take flight and expose my back  
to thy spear-stroke,  
No, I shall dash straight on, and receive thy shaft  
in my bosom  
If, as thou sayest, the gods so will; now, in *thy* turn,  
avoid thee

*My* spear of bronze, and oh, how I wish in thy flesh  
it were buried!

Then would the burden of war be lighter far to the  
Trojans,

Thou being brought to thy death who hast been  
their greatest destruction."

Thus having spoken he levelled and cast his long-  
shadowed spear

Boldly, and missed not, — the shield of Peleides he  
hit in the centre, —

Yet, far away from the shield it glanced and re-  
bounded; and Hector

Angered, seeing in vain he had cast the ponderous  
weapon,

Stood there confounded, his spear had been cast, nor  
had he another.

Then he Deïphobos called, his white-shielded brother,  
and loudly,

Asking a fresh long spear, — there was no Deïphobos  
nigh him!

Then in his heart of hearts sank the awful truth,  
and he muttered: —

"Lo, to my death the immortals have called me,  
and loud is the summons!

Surely I thought I saw the hero Deïphobos by me,

Yet he is safe in the wall, and the shape a disguise  
of Athena.

Now close upon me is death the unmerciful! Distant  
it is not,

Shun it I cannot! Abandoned by Zeus and far-  
darting Apollo,

Erstwhile my watchful defenders, dread fate hath  
followed and found me!

Now, then, to die, but not without effort, not without  
glory!

Now for unflinching achievement that men of the  
future shall hear of!"

Suiting action to word he drew the falchion mighty  
Hanging along by his side and, collecting himself  
for an effort,

Darted like high-flying eagle which cometh suddenly  
earthward

Down through the louring clouds, and intent, for his  
prey, upon snatching

Either a new-born lamb, or hare that is crouching in  
terror:

Even like that on Achilles sprang Hector, shaking  
his broad-sword.

Hasting to meet him, the latter, nigh bursting with  
furious anger

Held before him his beautiful targe with its curious  
markings,



Shaking his helmet bright with its fourfold crest and  
its horsehair.

Like to the star that at nightfall outshineth its  
comely companions —

Hesperus, fairest of stars whose beauty is set in the  
heavens —

Such was the gleam of the spear-point keen which  
before him Achilles

Shook in his stout right hand with deadly purpose to  
Hector,

Eyeing his beautiful flesh for the fittest spot to trans-  
fix him.

Now all the rest of his body was fenced by the  
beautiful armor

Reft as spoil from the slain when he vanquished the  
might of Patroklos;

But, where his collar-bones met, disuniting the neck  
from the shoulder,

There the gullet appeared, where the speeding of  
life is the quickest.

There, as Hector rushed on, Achilles planted a spear-  
stroke,

Driving the point right through, but failing to  
sunder the windpipe

So that he still might speak the warnings of fate to  
his slayer.

Down in the dust he fell, and above him vaunted  
Achilles: —

“Hector, fondly thou thoughtest when stripping the  
arms from Patroklos,  
Thou wouldst be safe, and dreadedst me not because  
I was absent.  
Fool! for afar, by the hollow ships, a stouter avenger,  
I, even I, was left, and thy knees have I palsied; and  
fouly  
Dogs and kites shall entreat thee, but he have a  
glorious funeral.”

Then, and his voice was faint, said crest-waving  
Hector in answer:—

“Now by thy life, by thy knees, and thine own fond  
parents, I pray thee  
Suffer me not at the ships to be torn by the dogs of  
the Argives,  
Nay, but of bronze and of gold accept to thy full  
satisfaction  
Ransom my father will pay and the queenly mother  
that bare me;  
Then give my body again that the Trojans and wives  
of the Trojans  
Burn me at home, on the funeral pyre, with rites that  
are seemly.”

Grim was the look of Achilles as thus he said in  
rejoinder:—

“Talk not to me, thou dog, nor beg me by knees nor  
by parents!

Would I could bring my mind to cut thee in pieces,  
and eat thee  
Raw for the deeds thou hast done; and none the less  
am I certain  
Man doth not live who can drive from thy head the  
dogs that shall rend it,  
Not should he proffer right here a ten-fold or twenty-  
fold ransom,  
Aye, and twice as much promise; nay, not if Dar-  
danian Priam  
Offered thy weight in gold, not then should the  
mother that bare thee  
Wail o'er thee laid on a bier; but dogs and vultures  
shall eat thee."

Then, and his death was nigh, spake crest-waving  
Hector in answer: —  
"Now as thou art I see thee, unyielding, with heart  
as of iron.  
Yet beware lest for my sake the wrath of the gods  
shall pursue thee,  
And, on thy day of fate, with the Skaian Gates as a witness,  
Paris and Phoibos Apollo shall slay thee, thy might  
notwithstanding."

These were his final words, and the death-shadow  
covered him wholly.  
Gone from his limbs was the soul, and downward to  
Hades it fluttered

Mourning his fate, and leaving unlived his youth  
and his manhood.

Then, tho' he spake to the dead, Achilles answered  
him, saying:—

“Die! and for my death I wait its approach and  
shall welcome it, even,  
Any time Zeus and the rest of the gods are pleased to  
decree it.”

Thus he said, and withdrew from the dead the  
ponderous spear,  
Laying it down at a distance; and then from his  
shoulders the armor  
Rent, all covered with blood; meanwhile the other  
Achaïans  
Up about them came running, and stood there gazing  
with wonder  
Both at the stalwart frame and wondrous beauty  
of Hector.  
Not a man of them all but stabbed him, and said to  
his neighbor:—

“Look at him! Easier far is this same Hector to  
deal with  
Now than yesterday, bringing his fire to burn up our  
shipping.”

Thus they said to each other, and stood about him  
and stabbed him.

Then, as soon as the armor was reft from the body,  
Achilles

Rose and in wingèd words addressed the Danaans,  
saying: —

“Hearken to me, my friends, ye leaders and princes  
of Argos:

Seeing by grace of the gods this man is removed,  
who aforetime

Did us many an ill, yea, more than the rest alto-  
gether,

Come, let us take our arms, and make assault on the  
city,

Thus ascertaining how Troy feeleth now, this man  
having fallen,

Whether abandon their high-walled town, or stay  
and defend it.

Hold! my soldierly ardor hath made me forget for  
a moment!

Lying in death at the ships is one unwept and un-  
buried,

Even Patroklos, and him I shall never forget while  
I linger

Here with the living, and knees can stir; and even in  
Hades



E'en though the dead are forgot of the dead, I shall  
think of my comrade.  
So, while the youth of the army are singing a pæan  
of triumph,  
Back let us march to our barracks, the ships, and  
carry the body.  
Glory enough for one day that mighty Hector is  
fallen,  
Almost a god to the Trojans, so great their observ-  
ance and worship."

Thus he said, and for Hector unseemly abasement  
was planning:  
Both of the feet of the dead man he bored from the  
heel to the ankle,  
Then through both thrust ox-hide thongs, and tied  
them securely  
Back of the car so the head would trail with the  
chariot going.  
Then he loaded the armor thereon and, the chariot  
mounting,  
Lashed the steeds to a run; and not unwilling the  
coursers  
Flew, and as Hector was dragged a dust-cloud rose,  
and about him  
Fluttered his sable locks, and his head, aforetime  
so comely,

Helpless lay in the dust; for Zeus to his enemies left  
him

There in the land of his birth that day to be foully  
dishonored.

Thus was his whole head buried in dust; and his  
agonized mother

Tore her hair, and the glittering veil cast wildly  
from off her,

Ah, and exceeding bitter her cry, her son thus be-  
holding.

Piteous, too, were the groans of his father fond, and  
the people

Joined in the wail up and down in the city with  
moans universal.

Greater distress had not been, nor dismay, had  
towering Ilios

Sunk from her high estate consumed by fell conflagration.

Such was the frenzy of Priam the people barely  
withheld him

Seeking to leave the gates, and he begged every man  
of them, saying: —

“Hold, friends! Unhand me, I pray, tho’ kindly  
your purpose, and let me

Go from the city alone, and seek the camp of the  
Argives.

I would beseech this man, this accursèd worker of  
    horrors,  
Haply to bring him to shame in sight of his fellows,  
    and pity  
Unto my years; he, too, hath a father, aged as I  
    am,  
Peleus, by whom he was bred to become a bane to  
    the Trojans,  
Chiefly to me, for full many a son he hath slain in  
    his flower.  
Yet is my grief for one more than all the rest, tho' I  
    mourn them,  
This one, whose loss bringeth pangs that will drive  
    me in sorrow to Hades,  
Hector! Would he had died in mine arms, for then  
    his unhappy  
Mother and I would have mourned, but with funeral  
    rites as is fitting."

Thus he spake in his grief, and the men all joined in  
    his groanings.  
Hekabè, then, mid the women, led off in wild lamen-  
    tation: —

"Son, ah, woe is me! why longer live in my sorrow,  
Thou being dead, by night-time and daytime my  
    boast in the city,

Aye, and a blessing to Troy, to all both its men and  
its women!

Like to a god they hailed thee; exceeding great was  
the glory

Thou wert to them when alive, yet death's dread  
doom is upon thee!"

Thus spake the mother in tears; but the wife of  
Hector to this time

Knew not the truth, for messenger came not to tell  
that her husband

Waited without the gates; but she, in a nook of the  
palace,

Wrought at a web that was purple and bright, and in  
it was weaving

Flowers of many a hue; and she called to her fair-  
tressed attendants

Bidding them place on the fire a tripod mighty,  
providing

Water warmed for a bath for Hector returning from  
battle —

Little dreaming that, far from baths, by the wiles of  
Athena

Hector already was fallen, struck down by the hand  
of Achilles.

When, now, wailing she heard, and groanings that  
came from the tower,

Tottered beneath her her limbs, and down to earth  
fell the shuttle.

Then, and far other her cry, she called to her hand-  
maidens, saying:—

“Hither! two follow me! I go to see what be-  
tideth!

Moanings I hear, 'tis my queen-mother's voice, and  
the heart in my bosom

Beats as 'twould leap to my mouth, and the knees  
are stiffened beneath me.

Nigh to the children of Priam is death— may ear  
never hear it,

Yet am I sorely afraid my Hector, cut off from the  
city,

Fleeth alone with Achilles behind, and the pride  
that possessed him

Now hath been his undoing; for back with his men  
he remained not,

No, he was far in the front, and his spirit yielded to  
no man.”

Thus having said, from the hall she sped and, heart  
beating wildly,

Frantic she flew down the street with her hand-  
maidens running beside her.



Soon she was top of the tower where the men were  
thronging, and stood there

Peering down from the wall, and lo before her was  
Hector

Dragged in the dust, remorselessly dragged, and  
swift were the horses

Bearing the body away to the hostile camp of the  
Argives.

Darkness like unto death shut the sight from her  
eyes, and she tottered

Backward and fell, and her breath grew faint till  
seemingly lifeless.

Far from her head flew the glittering bands confining  
her tresses —

Fillet and netting and coronal fair, and the veil  
Aphrodîtè

Gave on the day of her wedding, the day when crest-  
waving Hector

Led her a bride from Eëtion's home, giving gifts  
without number.

Round about her came flocking her sisters-in-law,  
and among them

Lifted her up in her death-like swoon, and warded the  
death-stroke.

So, when she breathed once more, and feeling re-  
turned, and her reason,

Moaning, and choking with sobs, she said mid the  
sorrowing women: —

“Hector, ah woe is me! Alike were we born to  
misfortune,  
Both of us, thou in Troy, in the haughty palace of  
Priam,  
I in Thebes, where the woods slope down from the  
summits of Plakos,  
There where Eëtion reigned, the father who nurtured  
my childhood,  
Ill-starred sire of a child ill-born — and would I had  
not been!  
Under the bowels of earth, down, down, to the man-  
sions of Hades  
Thou art departing, and me, in my bitter affliction,  
thou leavest  
Widowed and lone in the halls; thy child, too, merely  
an infant,  
Joy to thee nevermore, nor thou his needed defender.  
Even if he should escape this dreadful war with the  
Argives  
Yet in the after time will his days be labor and sorrow.  
Men will encroach on his lands; for the day that a  
boy is an orphan  
Maketh him friendless; with eyes cast down, de-  
jected and needy,  
Goeth, his face all tears, such child to friends of his  
father,  
Timidly plucking the cloak of one and the coat of  
another:

One of these in compassion just giveth a sip at the  
wine-cup,  
Barely enough to moisten the lips, not moisten the  
palate.<sup>1</sup>  
Boys unorphaned as yet will drive him away from  
the table  
Dealing him blows with the fist, and saying with  
insolent bluster,  
'Here, take this, and begone! no father of thine  
feasteth with us.'  
Then, in tears, will our boy come back to his mother,  
a widow,  
Even our little prince, who once on the knees of his  
father  
Fed upon marrow alone and cuts of fatlings the  
choicest;  
Aye, and when sleep overtook him, and childish play  
was forgotten,

<sup>1</sup> This line was evidently a proverb.

This portion of the lament has been pronounced an interpolation, on the ground that the child's grandfather was a King, and his uncles still living; but the mother is looking forward several years to a time when the baby would have become a youth, and might well have no near male relatives. Moreover, this lament is by the author of Book XXIV where Priam's surviving sons are given a bad name. Apart from these considerations Andromache was in a state of mind at the time to take an exaggerated view of the evil conditions surrounding the child. To the translator this lament seems exceptionally fine, even for Homer, and he believes that interpolation is suspected on insufficient grounds.

Slept in a stately bed in the tender care of a nurse-  
maid —

Couch of the softest down, and heart filled full of  
contentment —

Many a sorrow awaiteth him now, bereft of his  
father,

Even our 'little prince', as the Trojans fondly have  
called him,

Seeing that thou alone wast ward of their gates and  
their ramparts.

Lying uncared for, by ships of thy foes, afar from  
thy parents,

Coiling worms will devour thee when dogs are sated  
with gnawing —

Naked, yet raiment of thine is stored in thy halls in  
abundance,

Fine and beautiful vesture as hand of woman could  
make it.

All I devote to ravening flames, as it were on a pyre,  
Nowise a service to thee since thou amid them wilt  
burn not,

But, in thy countrymen's eyes, some show of funereal  
honors."

Thus she spake in her woe mid the answering sobs of  
the women.

## BOOK XXIII

Homer nowhere shows himself more of a necromancer than by the skill with which the sympathies of the reader are shifted in this book from father, mother, and wife of Hector to Achilles, the immediate cause of their sorrows. Fate does not play so obvious a part as in the Greek tragedies; but the reader cannot help seeing that Patroklos, Hector, and Achilles were involved in a network of circumstances such that each must play the part he did, and the catastrophe was in each case inevitable; and all justly command sympathy. The book begins as follows:—

THUS all over the city was wailing; without, the  
Achaïans  
When they had ended their march at the fleet and  
the Hellespont, mostly  
Scattered each to his ship; but the Myrmidons still  
were together  
Kept by Achilles, who spake to his war-loving  
followers, saying:—

“Myrmidons, men of swift coursers, my trusty and  
chosen companions,  
No time is this to unloose from the car our strong-  
footed horses,



But, with our horses and chariots both let us, drawing anigh him,  
Make our moan for Patroklos. a tribute due the departed.  
When of our bitter grief we are sated, then and not till then  
Let us unharness the horses, and funeral supper make ready."

Thus he spake, and they groaned all together, led by Achilles.  
Thrice then around the corse they drave their heavy-maned horses,  
Moaning; and Thetis within them inspired a passion of sorrow.  
Wet were the sands with the tears of men and wet was their armor —  
Tears of the great, so great was the fallen, so mighty in battle.

After the ceremonies were over Achilles gives a funeral feast, but refuses all solicitations to take food himself until the funeral rites for Patroklos are completed. The following extracts, giving an account of the ghost of Patroklos, the procuring of wood for his pyre, and other matters incident to his funeral, are the gems of the book: —

## THE GHOST OF PATROKLOS

*and*

## GETTING WOOD FOR THE FUNERAL PYRE

All, now, ready for sleep, went every man to his  
camp-fire,

All but Achilles, who lay by the shore of the boisterous ocean,

Heavily groaning, and lying about him the Myrmidons many

Slept in an open space where the waves rolled in on the sea-beach.

When, now, slumber had seized him, unloosing his heart from its sorrows,

Slumber sweet and profound — for his stalwart limbs were weary

After his furious chase of Hector by Ilios wind-swept —

Sudden before him a spectre appeared, 'twas the ghost of Patroklos,

All like the man himself, in size and eyes and in features,

Even in voice the same, and like was the raiment that clad him.

Over the head of the sleeper it bent, and spake to him, saying: —

“Thou, Achilles, asleep, and I from thy memory  
faded!

Never forgattest thou me when alive, but dead thou  
forgettest.

Haste thee the funeral rites that admit to the portals  
of Hades.

Far, far away am I kept by the shades, the spirits  
departed,

Nor am I suffered at all to consort with them over  
the river:

So all homeless I wander by Hades' wide-gated  
dwelling.

Give thy hand to my tears I beseech thee, seeing  
hereafter

I shall return no more from Hades after my  
burning.

Never, as living men, shall we sit apart from our  
comrades

Taking sweet counsel together; for me hath destiny  
woful

Swallowed up in the doom to man at his birth-hour  
appointed.

Thou, even thou, art doomed in all thy glorious  
beauty

Under the Trojan walls to die,—the foeman ex-  
ulting.

So this thing I entreat and implore, and hope thy  
compliance:

Let not thy bones be laid apart from mine, but together,

Even as in thy home we were reared together in childhood.

I was a little boy when Menoitios brought me from Opus  
Unto thy father's house, for unhappily killing a playmate,

Even Amphidimas' son, on the selfsame day that I slew him, —

Child, and meaning it not, in a pet while playing at jackstones.

Straightway chivalrous Peleus received me into his household,

Trained me nobly with thee, and 'squire of Achilles' he named me;

So, when united in death, let a common urn hold our ashes."

Then, in response to the phantom outspake swift-footed Achilles: —

"Wherefore, dearly beloved, hast thou come hither, and wherefore

Bidden me things I should do of myself? Yea, yea!

I will do them.

Draw thou anigh me, I pray, and embracing, though but a moment,

So shall we comfort each other, our woes for that moment forgotten."

Suiting action to word he stretched forth his arms to  
the phantom,  
Yet he encountered it not; for the shade under earth  
like a vapor  
Vanished with gibbering cry; and astounded up rose  
Achilles,  
Wringing his hands, and amazed, exclaimed in an  
outburst of sorrow:—

“Gods! this is wondrous strange! There remaineth  
even in Hades  
Something, a shadow, a semblance, though living  
substance it hath not!  
Lo, now, the whole night long hath the ghost of hap-  
less Patroklos  
Stood right here by my side, and with piteous moan-  
ing and wailing,  
Told me his wants, each one, and it looked like  
Patroklos exactly.”

Thus he said; and a passion of tears he stirred in his  
hearers  
So they were wailing still when the rosy touch of the  
morning  
Fell on the pallid dead; and, with morning, King  
Agamemnon  
Sent a detachment of mules and of men for the getting  
of firewood,



Setting Meriones over the band, the strenuous  
Cretan.

Forth from the camp they fared, equipped with  
wood-choppers' axes,

Also with ropes well made; and the mules tramped  
on just before them,

Oft breaking into a canter, and rearing, plunging,  
and shying,<sup>1</sup>

Till, in the end, they came to the well-watered  
gorges of Ida.

There they lustily chopped, and the high-plumed  
chiefs of the forest

Fell with a crash; and, cutting and splitting the  
trunks, the Achaians

<sup>1</sup> This line in the original is manifestly designed to give the clattering sound of the mules in rapid motion. It contains three adverbs found nowhere else and probably coined for the purpose of sound, indicating motion up, down, and sidewise, and commonly translated "up hill, down dale, and zig-zag," but this rendering gives no significance to the sound of the line, particularly as the men were on foot and expected to keep up. In the opinion of the translator Homer means to indicate that the mules had many a frolic, and that the adverbs refer to the accompanying body motions as above rendered. The sound of the original, and perhaps the spirit, would be better given if rendered:

Oft breaking into a canter with frantic fantastical antic.

If the usual interpretation of the line be correct it might be rendered:

Up-hill often and down, and by many a tortuous winding.

Bound them behind the mules; and they, through  
the undergrowth tearing,  
Cut the ground with their hooves; and logs the wood-  
cutters carried,  
All as Meriones told them to do, their strenuous  
captain.  
So, on the shore, and in orderly pile, rose the wood  
where Achilles  
Purposed a mighty tomb for himself as well as  
Patroklos.

ACHILLES SHEARS THE HAIR VOWED TO THE  
RIVER SPERCHEIOS

Sudden a new-born thought came into the heart of  
Achilles:  
Standing apart from the pyre, he sheared off a fore-  
lock golden, —  
Lock he had suffered to grow untrimmed for the  
river Spercheios, —  
Saying, as sadly he gazed o'er the dark sea's billowy  
pathway: —

“Vain was the vow, Spercheios, once vowed by  
Peleus my father,  
That, on my happy return to the land of my birth,  
I would straitly

Shear mine hair in thine honor, and offer a hecatomb  
sacred

Over thy fountains, where standeth thy temple and  
altar of incense.

Thus did the old man vow, but his hopes thou hast  
still disappointed:

So, as I never go back to my own dear land, I would  
offer

Unto the hero Patroklos this lock to bear on his  
journey."

Ceasing, the lock he placed in the clay-cold hand of  
his comrade.

#### WINDS FAN THE FLAME OF THE PYRE

Lo, now, the funeral pile of the hapless dead would  
not kindle.

Then, once more, came a new-born thought to the  
heart of Achilles:

Standing apart from the pyre, he prayed two blus-  
tering storm-winds,

Boreas mighty, and Zephyr, and promised them  
offerings gracious,

Also the while from a goblet of gold poured many  
libations,

Begging them come to the pyre that the wood might  
hasten to kindle,

So that the body might burn, and at once; and light-footed Iris,  
Hearing his prayers, departed to carry the storm-winds his message.

They at the moment were met in the house of tempestuous Zephyr,  
All at a joyous banquet; and Iris, hurrying thither,  
Stopped on the threshold of stone; and they, as soon  
as they saw her,  
Rose, and each of them asked her to sit at the table  
beside him.  
She, however, refused to be seated, and told them  
her message: —

“No seat for me! I am going straight back to the  
streams of the ocean,  
Unto the Aithiops' land, for there they are hecatombs burning  
Unto us gods, and my portion I want of the sacrifice  
offered.  
Up, now, Achilles is praying to Boreas shrill and to  
Zephyr,  
Begging them come in their might, and promiseth  
offerings seemly,  
Wishing their aid to enkindle the pyre whereon for  
his burning  
Fallen Patroklos lies, whom all the Achaians are  
mourning.”

Thus she spake and departed: and they, in response  
to her bidding,  
Rose with a mighty sound, and the clouds drave  
wildly before them.  
Swiftly over the sea they swept with their gusts, and  
the billows  
Waked 'neath their shrilly blasts: and coming to  
deep-soiled Troy-land  
Down they swooped on the pyre, and a wondrous  
fire set a-roaring.  
Thus they the whole night long cast the burning  
embers together,  
Blowing with whistling blasts; and all night long  
great Achilles,  
Forth from a golden bowl in a two-handled cup he  
was holding,  
Drew off wine, and the earth he drenched with con-  
tinuous pouring,  
Calling time after time on the shade of hapless  
Patroklos.  
Like as a father bewaileth a son while burning his  
ashes —  
Son that is newly wed who leaveth his parents sore  
stricken —  
So Achilles lamented his friend as the ashes were  
burning,  
Dragging his worn-out frame by the pyre, and loud  
were his groanings.



Just as the dawn-star came to tell the earth of the  
day-break,  
After which over the sea sweepeth Morn in her  
mantle of saffron,  
Right then the funeral pile burned out, and the fire  
ceased blazing.  
Then, too, the winds went back, retracing the path  
to their homesteads  
Over the Thracian main; and wild were its surgings  
and sobbings.  
Nigh to the pyre, and in slumber sweet, Achilles was  
lying,  
Where he in weariness fell, and on rushed sleep in a  
moment.

The description of the way the bones of Patroklos were collected and buried is repeated almost verbatim later in regard to Hector, and therefore is omitted here. The remainder of the book — more than six hundred lines — gives an account of the funeral games in honor of the dead. Those who disbelieve in the unity of authorship of the Iliad regard this account as by a later hand; and it obviously has nothing to do with the story, and is too long to be included in an abridged translation like this.

## BOOK XXIV

ENDED, now, were the games; and the people re-  
paired to the galleys,  
Scattering each to his own, and when they had taken  
their supper  
Turned to the comfort of slumber; but, all unlike  
them, Achilles  
Yearned for Patroklos, the friend who was gone, and  
sleep that subdueth  
All men came not, and this way and that he turned  
on his pillow,  
Thinking of all they had done and hardships en-  
countered together  
Cleaving the battles of men and the sea's tempest-  
uous billows.  
Many a bitter tear poured forth at such fond recol-  
lections,  
Much he in restlessness tumbled and tossed, then  
suddenly starting  
Up from his couch he would stalk from his camp, and  
along by the sea-shore <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here, as in other passages, Achilles when in trouble re-  
sorted to the sea for consolation — perhaps being so repre-  
sented because son of a sea-nymph.

Aimlessly wander; and never, when night was spent,  
    did the morning  
Find him asleep when the sea and the shores grew  
    bright at her dawning;  
Nay, it was then he would yoke to his car his swift-  
    flying horses,  
Tying Hector behind to be trailed in the dust and  
    dishonored.  
Thrice would he drag the corse round the grave of  
    fallen Patroklos,  
Then turn in at the camp; but Hector always he left  
    there  
Stretched in the dust face down; but Apollo every  
    defacement  
Kept from the body for all that, for he for the man  
    felt compassion  
Even when dead, and the ægis of gold spread over  
    him wholly  
So that the body was torn not, tho' dragged with  
    fury exceeding.

Glorious Hector, thus, did he foully entreat in his  
    madness,  
But, from Olympos, the gods looked on with dis-  
    pleasure, and counselled  
Stealing the body by Hermes, the far-sighted Slayer-  
    of-Argus.

This scheme pleased all the rest, but never was pleasing to Hera,

No, nor Poseidon, nor yet to the bright-eyed virgin, Athena.

They held out as at first in hatred of Ilios sacred, Yea, and the Trojans and Priam, because of the folly of Paris

Who, when the goddesses brought for his judgment the apple of Discord,

Gave Aphroditè the prize who promised him Helen, his ruin.

But, when the twelfth day dawned, Apollo bespake the immortals: —

“Brutal are ye, ye gods, ye ingrates! Tell me, hath Hector

Burned in your honor no haunches of oxen, and kids that were choicest?

Grace ye have not, for all that, his lifeless body to rescue

So that his wife and his mother and only child may behold it,

Also Priam, his sire, and the Trojan folk, who would quickly

Burn it with fire and with funeral rites that are fitting observance.

Yet are ye pleased, ye gods, to abet accursèd Achilles, Man of reprobate heart, relentless, who civilization

Knoweth no more than a lion whose strength and  
ill-governed spirit  
Keepeth him raiding the sheepfolds of men in quest  
of his supper.  
So, now, Achilles all pity hath lost, nor shame hath  
he either.  
Many a man must part with a dearer friend than  
Patroklos,  
Even a brother or son; but, when from his heart he  
hath wept him,  
Quelleth his pain, for to man have the Fates given  
souls of endurance.  
Yet this fellow brave Hector, albeit of life he hath  
reft him,  
Bindeth his horses behind, and about the tomb of his  
comrade  
Draggeth him, — nowise more glorious this, nor  
showeth more feeling.  
Let him take heed lest, great as he is, he feeleth our  
vengeance.  
Lo, 'tis the silent dust this madman treateth so  
vilely."

Then, with indignant disdain, proud Hera answered  
him, saying: —  
"Lord of the silver bow, thy word would have sem-  
blance of reason



Granting that Hector and matchless Achilles were  
equal in honor.

Hector was mortal, remember, and suckled the breast  
of a woman ;

But, of a goddess Achilles was born, and I myself  
bred her

During her childhood and youth, and grown up gave  
her in marriage

Unto a hero, to Peleus, the dearest of men to im-  
mortals.

All ye were there at the bridal, ye gods, and thou  
wert among us

Playing thy harp at the banquet, yet side with the  
lowly, thou traitor."

Then for rejoinder responded great Zeus who darken-  
eth heaven: —

"Hera, be ye not wroth at the gods with wrath of  
unreason!

Nowise equal their honor shall be, but Hector for  
all that

Used to be dearest to us of the men inhabiting Troy-  
land —

Certainly so to me, for in due oblations he failed  
not.

Never was wanting at altar of mine a feast that was  
fitting,

Even libations and incense, observances due the  
immortals.

No more talk of the stealing of Hector, — do it ye  
cannot, —

Seeing Achilles would know, for his mother attendeth  
him always.

Nay, let one of the gods call Thetis hither to meet me  
Giving me chance for a politic word, in hope that  
Achilles

Take due gifts from Priam, admitting Hector to  
ransom.”

Thus spake Zeus, and storm-footed Iris to carry the  
message

Rose and departed and, reaching a spot 'twixt Samos  
and Imbros,

Plunged in the wine-dark sea with a splash, and the  
waves roared above her.

Down to the depths she sped, as a sinker attached to  
a fish-hook

Speedeth apace, a bearer of fate to ravenous fishes.

Thetis she found in a wide-arched cave, and round  
her the other

Nymphs of the sea sat close; and she in the midst  
of the cluster

Wept at the fate of her matchless son, foredoomed  
of a surety

There to perish at Troy, afar from the land of his  
fathers.

Swift-footed Iris drew nigh and, halting, spake to  
her, saying: —

“Thetis, arise; Zeus calleth, whose wisdom perisheth  
never.”

Then for answer responded fair Thetis the silvery-  
footed: —

“Wherefore am I thus called by that mighty god?  
for I shrink from

Mingling amid the immortals with heart so aching  
and woful.

Yea, I am going, nor vain shall his word be, whatever  
he sayeth.”

Suiting action to word, her robe the glorious goddess  
Took, — ’twas a blue-black robe than which no ves-  
ture is blacker —

Then she started, and walking in front went wind-  
footed Iris

Over the sea, which divided its waves and made them  
a pathway.

Up on the shore they stepped and, together mounting  
to heaven,

Wide-eyed Zeus, son of Kronos, they found with the  
ever-existing

Gods all sitting about him; and Thetis beside the  
All-father  
Seated herself, for aside stepped Athena; and graciously Hera  
Placed a goblet of gold in her hand, and welcomed  
her warmly.  
Thetis drank and returned it, and thus began the  
All-father: —

“Thou art come, Goddess Thetis, with sorrowing  
heart to Olympos,  
Burdened in soul with grief unforgot; I know without  
telling.  
Yet, in the midst of thy woe, I will say for what I  
have called thee.  
Nine days' time hath dispute been rife amid the immortals  
Over the body of Hector and city-destroying Achilles,  
Such that many have urged far-sighted Hermes to  
steal it;  
I, however, accord to thy son the following honor,  
Hoping in times to come to keep thy respect and thy  
friendship: —

“Hie thee straight to the Danaan host, and admonish  
Achilles:  
Tell him the gods are indignant, and I most of all the  
immortals,

Seeing in madness of heart he persists in his holding  
of Hector,

Trusting that, awed by me, he himself will consent  
to a ransom.

Then, my plan is, Iris to send to great-hearted Priam,  
Bidding him to go to the Danaan ships to recover  
the body

Laden with gifts for Achilles sufficient to satisfy  
honor."

Thus spake Zeus; and Thetis, the goddess silvery-footed,

Went in compliance and, hurrying down from the  
heights of Olympos,

Came to the camp of her son, and found him loudly  
lamenting.

Round about him his comrades were busy preparing  
their breakfast,

Cooking a sheep that was fleecy and huge inside the  
encampment.

Close by the side of her son sat down the radiant  
goddess,

Clasped his hand in her own, and fondly spake to  
him, saying: —

"Son, how long wilt thou thus, in woe and bitterness  
pining,

Keep on gnawing thy heart out, of food forgetful  
and slumber?



Short is thy life-span, for death standeth nigh, and  
fate is resistless.

Yet, just listen a moment, for Zeus's messenger am I,  
E'en that the gods are indignant at thee, and he more  
than others,

Seeing in madness of heart thou wilt not that Hector  
be ransomed.

Nay, be advised. Let him go, and recompense take  
for the body."

Then with reluctant assent Achilles answered her,  
saying: —

"Be it so. Whoso a ransom shall bring shall recover  
the body,

Granting this bidding of Zeus be in downright  
earnestness spoken."

Thus in the camp, in the circle of ships, the son and  
the mother

Many a wingèd word spake lovingly one to the other.  
Zeus, meanwhile, sent Iris with message to Ilios  
sacred: —

"Haste thee and go, swift Iris, and, leaving the seat  
of Olympos,

Bear my word to the city of Troy, to great-hearted  
Priam,

Even to ransom his son, and go to the camp of the  
Argives  
Carrying gifts to Achilles to give him entire satisfaction,  
Yea, and alone — not a man of the Trojans in any  
wise with him,  
Saving an elderly herald to drive the mules and the  
wagon,  
And, when the twain shall return, bring the body  
back to the city.”

Thus he spake; and storm-footed Iris to carry her  
message  
Went to the dwelling of Priam, and found there  
sorrow and mourning.  
Sitting about their sire, his sons in the court of the  
palace  
Drenched their raiment with tears, and the old man  
sat there amid them  
Closely wrapped in a mantle, and smeared with the  
filth of the courtyard  
Clutched and poured on his head as he grovelled in  
agonized mourning.  
Daughters and daughters-in-law throughout the  
house were lamenting,  
Thinking about the fallen, — their lost ones many  
and valiant

Lying of life bereft, cut off by the hand of the  
Argives.

Zeus's messenger came to the side of Priam and,  
halting,

Spake in a still small voice; and his frame was all  
of a tremble: —

“Be of good cheer in thy soul, Dardanian Priam, and  
fear not;

Know that I am not come here in anywise boding  
thee evil,

Nay, but meaning thee well; and Zeus's messenger  
am I,

Zeus, who bideth afar, yet careth and pitieth  
greatly.

Go, saith he of Olympos, and ransom glorious Hector  
Bearing gifts to Achilles to melt the spirit within  
him,

Aye, and alone — no man of the Trojans going beside  
thee

Saving an elderly herald to drive the mules and the  
wagon,

And, when again ye return, to bear the dead to the  
city.”

After her message was told, and gone was swift-  
footed Iris,

Priam called to his sons to make the mule-wagon  
ready,

Binding the wagon-box on it; and down he went to  
a chamber,  
High-arched, fragrant, of cedar, which treasures held  
in abundance;  
Then he to Hekabè called, his wife, and spake to her,  
saying: —

“Darling, from Zeus there hath come an Olympian  
messenger to me,  
Bidding me go to the Danaan camp for the ransom  
of Hector,  
Bearing adequate gifts to melt the heart of Achilles.  
Come, now, tell me thy mind, how the purpose strik-  
eth thy judgment;  
As for myself, I admit, my soul sore yearneth to do it,  
Even to go to the Danaan ships, inside their en-  
campment.”

Thus he spake, and his wife with a wail replied to  
him, saying: —

“Ah me! where hath thy good sense strayed, thy  
sense that aforetime  
Made thee a marvel, not only at Troy but even to  
strangers?  
How art thou fain all alone to go to the camp of the  
Argives,  
E'en to the man who hath slain thy sons, the many,  
the valiant!

Iron thy heart is! As soon as he seeth thee fast in  
his power,  
Savage and treacherous he, and will pity, no, nor  
revere thee.  
Far from our son let us make our lament, as now in  
our dwelling;  
Even for this did resistless Fate spin the thread at  
his birth-hour,  
Yea, when I bare him myself, that swift-footed dogs  
should devour him  
Lying afar from his parents, in hands of a monster,  
whose liver, —  
Would I could eat it out! for that would be fit  
retribution  
Due for my son, whom he slew, in no wise a skulk  
or wrong-doer!  
Nay! he, defending his country, her men and deep-  
bosomed women,  
Stood like a man, not dreaming of fear, and shunning  
no danger.”

Then, and he looked like a god, the old man Priam  
responded: —

“Hold me not back when I long so to go; nay, nay!  
nor thyself be  
Bird in the halls boding evil; thou wilt not persuade  
me. If any



Dweller on earth had advised, be he priest, diviner,  
or prophet,  
We would have dreamed it delusion nor acted  
thereon; but the goddess  
Heard I my very self, and face unto face I beheld her.  
Go I will, nor vain shall her word be; and if 'tis my  
portion  
Even to die in the camp of the Argives, lo, I am  
willing.  
Yea, on the spot Achilles may slay me when once I  
have fondly  
Clasped my son in mine arms and disburdened  
my heart of its longing."

Thus he said, and threw open the beautiful lids of  
his coffers;  
Thence he took twelve robes for women, of excellent  
beauty,  
Twelve cloaks also of single fold, twelve coverlets  
also,  
Twelve white mantles, moreover, and tunics twelve  
in addition.  
Next he weighed and bore from the chamber, of gold  
ten talents,  
Tawny tripods twain brought forth, four glittering  
cauldrons,  
Forth a marvellous cup which the Thracians formerly  
gave him,

When on an embassy there, a wondrous possession;  
    this even  
Grudged not the old man then, for his heart with  
    frenzy exceeding  
Yearned to ransom his son; and then he drave out  
    the Trojans  
Hanging around in the court, and rebuked them  
    with bitterness, saying: —

“Off and begone, ye blackguards, ye loafers! have  
    ye not haply  
Sorrow enough at your homes that ye needs come  
    here to distress me?  
Think ye my sorrows from Kronides Zeus a wonder  
    to stare at,  
Sending the death of my worthiest son? To your  
    cost will ye know it!  
Easier prey will ye be to the Danaan sword! ye will  
    learn it,  
Now that Hector is fallen! but ere mine eyes see  
    the city  
Wasted and razed, may I die, and be gone to my  
    biding-place, Hades.”

Ceasing, he brandished his staff, and drave out the  
    men; and the rabble  
Left at the old man's insistence; and then he turned  
    on his children,

Chiding Helenos, Paris and Agathon, Antiphon,  
Pammon,  
Dion, Hippothoös, stout Deïphobos, loud-voiced  
Polites:  
These nine sons, with bitter rebuke, he called upon,  
saying: —

“Hurry, ye evil children, disgraces! Would ye were  
lying  
Dead at the ships all together and Hector instead  
of you living!  
Woe is to me, all-hapless! I once had sons of the  
noblest  
Born in all my dominions, and none of the good ones  
are left me.  
Gone is Mestor the godlike, and Troïlos, chariot-  
fighter,  
Gone, now, Hector, that god among men, nor in any-  
wise seemed he  
Son of a mortal man, but born of the mighty immor-  
tals!  
These hath Ares destroyed and ye things of shame  
are the remnant,  
Liars, and dancens, yea, leaders of dancens — the  
best of your doings —  
Plunderers here at home of the lambs and kids of my  
people!

Why not be doing, and quickly as may be make  
    ready a wagon,  
Then load these things upon it that we may be gone  
    on our journey? ”

While they were yoking the teams, in the palace the  
    herald and Priam  
Stood, thought crowding on thought, and toward  
    them came Hekabè running,  
Heavy of heart, but she held in her hand a magnifi-  
    cent goblet  
Filled with heart-quickenings wine for libation ere  
    they departed.  
Front of the horses she stood, and earnestly said to  
    her husband: —

“Here, take this for libation to Zeus the All-father,  
    and pray him  
Thou mayest safely return to thy home, since rashly  
    thy spirit  
Driveth thee into the hands of thy foes in spite of my  
    wishes.  
Yield to me this much, and pray to Kronion who  
    darkeneth heaven,  
Even Kronion of Ida who seeth all Troy-land, and  
    beg him  
Send his bird with its message of hope, the bird to  
    Kronion

Dearest of flying things, whose strength is also the  
greatest,  
Coming to us on the right, that thou thyself on be-  
holding  
Go with a trustful heart to the ships of the Danaan  
horsemen.  
If, in response to thy prayer, dread Zeus his mes-  
senger give not,  
I, for one, would not urge thee to go, in spite of thy  
longing."

Then said Priam, "My wife, this hest of thine I  
refuse not;  
Uplift of hands to Zeus is well, in hope of his  
pity."

Suiting action to word, he bade the chief of the hand-  
maids  
Pour on his hands pure water, and she came forward  
and poured it,  
Ewer in hand; and when he was washen his wife gave  
the goblet.  
Then, in the midst of the court he stood and prayed,  
and libation  
Poured of the wine, and he gazed into heaven rever-  
entially saying: —



“Zeus, All-father who rulest from Ida, most glorious,  
greatest,  
Grant that I come to Achilles as worthy of pity and  
kindness:  
Yea, and send me thy bird, swift messenger, bird  
that thou holdest  
Dearest of flying things, whose might is also the  
greatest,  
Showing it us on the right, that I myself on  
beholding  
Go with confident heart to the ships of the Danaan  
horsemen.”

Thus he entreated in prayer, and Zeus, dread Arbiter,  
heard him:  
Straightway an eagle he sent, the surest omen that  
flyeth,  
Dusky hunter in swamps, “black eagle” called by  
the many.  
Even as wide as the door of the lofty hall of a rich  
man,  
Such was the spread of its wings; on the right of them,  
too, came the eagle  
Winging its way through the city; and they, who  
were anxiously gazing,  
All were cheered, and rejoiced, and their hearts grew  
light at the omen.

Blithe was the old man then, and mounting his  
chariot briskly

Drave from the door of the court and the echoing  
porch, and before him

Mules were drawing the wagon, and wise Idaios was  
driving.

Close behind and astir with the whip came the  
horses, which Priam

Urged full speed down the city; his friends all fol-  
lowed beside him,

Bitterly wailing, and gloomy as though to his death  
he were going.

When both teams were out from the gateway and  
came to the moorlands,

Back to the city his kindred returned. But Zeus,  
the all-seeing,

Failed not to mark the defenceless old men as they  
came to the open.

Moved at the sight with compassion divine he called  
unto Hermes: —

“Hermes, seeing to thee the guiding of men is diver-  
sion,

Haste thee and go, and Priam conduct to the camp  
of the Argives,

Yet so do it that no man shall see him nor anywise  
know it,

None of the Danaans all, till he come to the face of  
Achilles.”

Thus he spake, and, not disobeying, the messenger  
Hermes  
Straightway under his feet tied on his beautiful sandals,  
Golden, that wear not away, which wafted him over  
the waters,  
Aye, and over the limitless earth, as swift as the wind-blast.  
Next his wand he grasped wherewith men's eyes he entranceth,  
Whomsoever he will, and again awaketh from slumber ;  
Then, with this in his hands, away flew stout Argiphontes.  
Quickly, therefore, at Troy and the Hellespont  
Hermes alighted;  
Then on foot he proceeded in guise of a prince and  
a young man  
Wearing his earliest beard — the comely spring-tide  
of mortals.

Right then the wayfaring twain, having passed the  
barrow of Ilos,  
Came to a halt in the river to water the mules and the  
horses;  
Darkness the while had set in on the earth, but the  
vigilant herald  
Hermes descried nigh at hand, and anxiously called  
unto Priam: —

“Think quick! worshipful sir; discretion is needful!  
straight on us  
Cometh a man, and I fear we shall soon be cloven  
asunder.  
Say, shall we take to the horses and flee, or beg him  
for mercy?”

Thus he spake, and the old man's senses forsook him  
and, frightened,  
Up stood his hair with dismay, — he stopped like a  
person bewildered.  
On came Hermes and, taking his hand, inquired of  
him, saying: —

“Whither, sire, so forlorn, art driving thy mules and  
thy horses  
Here in the night divine when other mortals are  
sleeping?  
Hast thou no fear of thy resolute foes, the Achaians  
hard by thee?  
Haply if one of them saw thee by night overtaken  
and darkness  
Carrying treasures like these, what, pray, would  
then be thy feeling?  
Thou thyself art not young, and the man who attends  
thee no more so —  
Both unfit for defence were anyone prompt to assail  
thee.

But, for myself, I will evil entreat thee in no wise,  
and others  
Keep from doing thee harm, for thou seemest to me  
like a father."

Then, for answer, responded the kingly veteran,  
Priam: —

"Perilous, true, is my plight, dear son, very much as  
thou sayest;  
Nevertheless some god hath stretched his hand for  
a shelter  
Seeing a wayfarer such as thyself he hath sent here  
to meet me —  
Most auspicious, so stately thy form and thy gracious  
appearance:  
Wise art thou also of heart, and blest are the parents  
that bare thee."

Then for rejoinder responded the Messenger, Slayer-  
of-Argus: —

"True as is fate, old man, are all these things thou  
hast spoken.  
Prithee go on now, and tell me this, and straitly in-  
form me  
Whether thou takest afar these treasures many and  
precious,  
Even to alien men, thus hoping to keep them in  
safety,



Or, is it this, that ye all are forsaking Ilios sacred  
Driven by fear; so great was your mightiest man  
    who is fallen,  
Even thy son; true warrior he, and a match for the  
    Argives."

Then for rejoinder responded the time-worn veteran,  
    Priam: —  
"Tell me, pray, who thou art, good sir, and who are  
    thy parents;  
Noble thy words are respecting the hapless, my son  
    who hath perished."

Then, once more, for rejoinder responded the Mes-  
senger, Hermes: —  
"Thou art testing me, sire, in asking of glorious  
    Hector.  
Him have I ofttimes seen in man-ennobling battle;  
And, at the ships, when he mightily drave at the  
    Argives and slew them,  
We who were bystanders watched him with wonder,  
    seeing Achilles  
Suffered us not to fight, being wroth at King Aga-  
    memnon.  
I am a squire of Achilles, the same ship brought us  
    to Troy-land;  
One of the Myrmidons am I, the name of my sire is  
    Polyk'tor.

Wealthy is he, and an old man also, even as thou art,  
Having of sons six others beside me, — I am the  
seventh,

And, by the cast of the lots, it was I who was chosen  
to come here.

Now I was bound from the ships to the plain, for  
the keen-eyed Achaians

Plan, at daybreak, to set in array their arms round  
the city.

Chafed are they at delay, and the kings can no longer  
restrain them.”

Then for rejoinder responded the time-worn veteran,  
Priam: —

“If thou art really the squire of the son of Peleus,  
Achilles,

Tell me the actual truth, if my son still lie by the  
shipping,

Or, torn limb from limb, hath been cast to the dogs  
by Achilles.”

Then once again in reply spake the Messenger,  
Slayer-of-Argus: —

“No, by no means, old man, have dogs devoured  
him, nor vultures,

Nay, but, just as he fell, by the ship of Achilles he lieth,

Whole in the camp; for the past twelve days hath he  
lain there, and nowise  
Yet is his flesh corrupt, nor eaten of worms, which  
devour  
Men that are fallen in battle; 'tis true he is dragged  
by Achilles  
Recklessly every morn about the tomb of his comrade  
Yet he marreth him not; thou wouldst marvel thyself  
shouldst thou see him  
Lying fresh as a dew-drop, the blood washed off that  
defiled him,  
Even the wounds all closed wherewith he was  
stricken, for many  
Thrust their spears in the corse; such care have the  
blessed immortals  
E'en though thy son is dead, for in life they heartily  
loved him."

Thus he spake; and Priam was glad, and answered  
him, saying: —  
"Surely, my child, it is good to make offerings due  
the immortals:  
Seeing my son when alive — if, indeed, that son ever  
did live —  
Never forgot in his halls the gods who abide on  
Olympus;  
So, they remember him now, albeit death is his por-  
tion.

Come, now, take at my hand this beautiful chalice,  
and guide me,  
Heaven consenting, that is, till I come to the camp  
of Achilles."

Then once again for rejoinder responded the Argi-  
cide, Hermes: —

"Thou art testing me, sire, thy junior, nor wilt thou  
persuade me  
Bidding me take at thy hands such a gift, Achilles  
not knowing.  
Him I am greatly in awe of, and inwardly scruple  
to rob him,  
Lest, hereafter, some harm may befall me; yet would  
I guide thee  
Even to glorious Argos, companion on foot and on  
shipboard,  
Neither would any man seek to assail thee from  
scorn of thy escort."

Thus spake the Helper, and then at a bound he, the  
chariot mounting,  
Soon had the reins in his hands and the whip, and  
the mules and the horses  
Filled with a spirit of might; and when they had  
come to the rampart

Guarding the camp with its moat, on the watchmen  
just getting supper  
Poured he slumber profound, did the Messenger,  
Argicide Hermes,  
All of them, — promptly threw open the gates and  
the cross-bars that held them,  
Then brought Priam inside, and the treasures the  
mule-wagon carried.

When they were finally come to the lofty camp of  
Achilles —  
Camp which the Myrmidons made for their king,  
of logs of the pine-tree  
Hewn, and above roofed over with thatching-rush  
mowed in the meadows,  
Closed in a courtyard wide, and stakes thick set to  
defend it;  
One bolt barring the door, ('twas pine, and three of  
the Argives  
Commonly drave it home, to withdraw it as many  
were needed —  
Three of the rest, for Achilles alone was able to shove  
it —)  
Hermes the Helper, then, threw open the bolt for  
the horse-team,  
Also the mules brought in with the splendid gifts  
for Achilles,



Then, to earth from the chariot sprang, and said unto  
Priam: —

“Sire, the truth is that I am a god immortal come  
hither,

Hermes, seeing my father hath sent me down to  
conduct thee.

Now I shall leave thee again, nor come to the eyes  
of Achilles.

Justly wroth would he be, and 'twould be reprehensible very

If, in his face and eyes, a god thus favored a mortal;  
Go thou in of thyself and clasp the knees of Achilles,  
Then in the name of his sire and fair-tressed mother  
entreat him,

Aye, and his son's sake, and wake in his heart its  
tenderest yearnings.”

Suiting action to word, once more to lofty Olympos  
Hermes departed; and Priam to earth from the  
chariot lighted,

Leaving Idaios behind to guard the mules and the  
horses.

Straight to the house went Priam — the quarters  
of gifted Achilles.

Him he found by himself, for his retinue sat a distance:

Two of them only were present just then, and busy  
in serving —

Even Automedon bold, and Alkimos, offshoot of  
Ares —

He, just ceasing from meat, and beside him still was  
the table.

Mid them entered great Priam unmarked of any till,  
kneeling

Nigh him, he clasped the knees and kissed the hands  
of Achilles,

Dreadful, manslaying hands which of many a son  
had bereft him.

Even as when misadventure o'ertaketh a man, who  
his country

Fleeth for homicide done, and hath come to the  
country of strangers,

E'en to a rich man's house, and astoundeth all that  
behold him,

So, all aghast was Achilles beholding unfortunate  
Priam;

So, too, the rest were amazed, and looked at each  
other in wonder.

Then, in mighty appeal, old Priam entreated him,  
saying: —

“Think of thy father, godlike Achilles, an old man  
as I am,

Ready to step from the threshold of life, and neigh-  
boring peoples

Haply oppress him, and no man is nigh to save from  
destruction.

Yet one comfort he hath, and his heart is glad when  
he heareth

Thou art alive, and he liveth in hope that springeth  
eternal

He shall behold thee again — his son returning from  
Troy-land.

I, unlike him, am all unblest, for children I once  
had

Noblest in all my dominions, and none of the good  
ones are left me.

Fifty once were my sons when the Argives landed in  
Troy-land:

Most of these many from earth have been swept by  
impetuous Ares;

He who alone was left and protected the city and  
people,

Him thou slewest but now, as he fought in defence of  
his country,

Hector; and, lo, 'tis for *his* sake I come to the camp  
of the Argives,

Hoping to win him from thee, and the ransom I  
bring thee is priceless.

Reverence bear to the gods, and compassion for me,  
great Achilles,

Thinking of thine own sire; and I am the more to be  
pitied,

Yea, have endured what no mortal on earth ever  
suffered before this,  
Even have kissed the hand that hath spilled the  
blood of my children."

Thus he spake; and Achilles, in tears at the thought  
of his father,  
Seized on the old man's hand, and pushed him away  
from him gently.  
Memories thronged on both; and one for man-  
slaying Hector  
Shook with his sobs as he lay there in front of the  
feet of Achilles,  
Also Achilles wept for his father, and then again  
changing  
Wept for Patroklos, and all through the house went  
the voice of their mourning.

After his grief was spent, and his frame was composed  
and his feelings,  
Straightway Achilles arose from his seat, and the  
suppliant lifted,  
Pitying sorely that old grey head thus prostrate  
before him;  
Then, he in wingèd words brake silence, and answered  
him, saying: —

“Ah, unhappy! in sooth the woes of thy soul have  
been many.  
How didst thou dare to come thus alone to the camp  
of the Argives,  
Unto the very eyes of the man who spared not thy  
children,  
Slaying thy many, thy valiant? Good sooth, but  
thy heart is of iron!  
Up, now, I pray thee, and sit thee in peace in this  
arm-chair, and let us  
Leave our sorrowing hearts to their rest, our grief  
notwithstanding,  
Knowing though passionate wailing benumb, it  
nothing availeth.  
Thus, forsooth, have they spun, the gods, for piteous  
mortals  
Ever to live in pain, while themselves know nothing  
of sorrow.  
Twain, ah, twain are the urns that stand in the halls  
of Kronion  
Full of the gifts that he giveth of evil, and one is of  
blessings;  
When Zeus joying-in-thunder hath mixed these,  
whoso receiveth  
Meeteth with good at times, and at times encounter-  
eth evil;  
Evil alone when he giveth, that man Zeus maketh  
down-trodden,



Ever pursued o'er the bountiful earth by ravenous  
hunger,

Vagabond, held in contempt alike by gods and by  
mortals.

Peleus, my father, for instance, was wondrously  
gifted of heaven,

Even from birth; for of all mankind he was easily  
foremost —

Child of good fortune and wealth, was king of the  
Myrmidon peoples,

And, though mortal himself, for wife they gave him a  
goddess.

But, to compensate, even on him the gods loaded  
evil,

Seeing no issue of princely descendants was born in  
his palace,

Nay, one only child he begat — to perish  
untimely.

I, while I live, cannot tend on his age, for far from  
my country

Here am I camping at Troy, a curse to thee and thy  
children.

Even so thou, old man, we are told wast formerly  
happy.

Even in all that land above Lesbos, kingdom of  
Makar,

All that Phrygia north and the far-reaching Helles-  
pont boundeth,

Thou, old man, wast reputed the greatest in riches  
and children;  
Yet since the dwellers of heaven have sent this ruin  
upon thee,  
Ever have battles and slaying of men engirded thy  
city.  
Bear up thereunder, and waste not thy soul with  
lament unabating;  
Nothing at all wilt thou gain, nay, naught by griev-  
ing for Hector,  
Neither wilt bring him to life ere another evil befall  
thee."

Then, for rejoinder responded the time-worn veteran,  
Priam: —  
"Bid me not sit in an arm-chair, Prince, in comfort,  
while Hector  
Lieth uncared for, but give him at once that mine  
eyes may behold him.  
Take the ransom I bring; it is great, and mayst thou  
enjoy it,  
Aye, and come to the land of thy birth, for, lo, thou  
hast spared me."

Then, with a hard stern look, outspake swift-footed  
Achilles: <sup>1</sup> —

<sup>1</sup> Many passages in Homer show that the first act in wel-  
coming a guest was to invite him to be seated. When Achilles,

“Nay, now, anger me not, old man! of myself I am minded  
Hector to grant thee. Moreover, from heaven hath  
a messenger bade it,  
Even the mother who bare me, the child of the sea-  
king, the Ancient.  
Yea, and further I know of thee Priam, nor failed I  
to mark it,  
Even that one of the gods was thy guide to the ships  
of the Argives,  
Seeing no mortal would venture to come, not even a  
young man,  
Unto our host; for the watchmen who guard it would  
fail not to see him,  
Neither with ease would he open the bolt that fenceth  
my doorway.  
Therefore, beware, stir my feelings no more in the  
midst of my sorrow,  
Lest, even thee, old man, though suppliant under my  
roof-tree,  
Lest even thee I spare not, and violate Zeus’s com-  
mandment.”

therefore, bids Priam seat himself, and Priam refuses, it seemed like a refusal of hospitality, and to put the ransoming of Hector on a commercial basis purely. Achilles, who intended to consent, partly as yielding to his better nature and partly because Zeus had commanded it, resented this view of the question. It is also true that Achilles liked to do things in his own way, and objected to being crossed in anything.

Thus he said, and, affrighted, the old man sat as he  
bade him.

Then, from the house like a lion Achilles sprang  
through the doorway,

Not alone, but two of his retinue hurried behind  
him —

Even Automedon bold and Alkimos, men that  
Achilles

Honored beyond their companions, next after fallen  
Patroklos —

Who, from under the yoke, unharnessed the mules  
and the horses,

Brought in the old man's herald and gave him a seat,  
and the ransom

Priceless for Hector's head took down from the well-  
polished wagon,

Leaving behind two robes and a well-woven tunic,  
for wrappings

Serving to cover the dead when given for the home-  
ward journey.

Maid-servants next were called, and bidden to wash  
and anoint him,

Taking the body apart that Priam might not behold  
it,

Lest, in the ache of his heart, he might not master  
his passion

Seeing his son, and the heart of Achilles transported  
by anger

Lead him to slay his guest, and violate Zeus's commandment.

Him when the servants had washed and anointed with oil of the olive,

Then on the body had placed a robe and a beautiful tunic,

Hector Achilles alone upraised and placed on a bier, And, with the help of his squires, then placed on the well-polished wagon.

Then, with a heavy groan, he called on the name of his comrade: —

“Be not angry, Patroklos, at me, if haply thou hearest,

Biding albeit in Hades, that I have released noble Hector

Unto his sire, for he gave in return an adequate ransom.

Of it thy share will I give thee again, as much as is seemly.”

Thus he said; and unto his campfire returning, Achilles

Seated himself on the sumptuous couch from which he had risen,

Placed by the opposite wall, and spake a word unto Priam,



Saying: "Thy son is released, old man, as thou  
hast besought me;  
Now on a bier he is lying, and thou shalt see him at  
daybreak,  
Taking him back to thyself, but now let us think of  
our supper.  
Fair-haired Niobè, even, bethought her of meat,  
notwithstanding<sup>1</sup>  
Twelve brave children, her all, were slain in her  
mansion together,  
Six of them daughters, and six of them sons just  
coming to manhood.  
All these sons were slain by the bow of Apollo, the  
daughters  
Artemis joying-in-arrows despatched, at Niobè  
angry,  
Seeing she boastingly claimed to outrival Leto who  
bare them,  
Saying that Leto bore two, but herself was the  
mother of many.

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that Achilles, from the time that he heard of the death of Patroklos till after the funeral, refused food; and the etiquette of mourning among Homeric peoples seems to have been very strict. Achilles tells the story of Niobe, showing that even she interrupted her mourning long enough to take food, and resumed it later, and argues that Priam would be following a worthy example if he did the same. His kindness in thus trying to persuade the worn old man that by so doing he would show no dishonor to Hector, rightly understood, is one of the fine touches of the Iliad.

Nine days' time they lay in their blood, nor in Niobè's  
country

Man was there left who could bury the dead, for  
mighty Kronion

Turned the people to stone; but the tenth day the  
dwellers in heaven

Buried them. Then she bethought her of meat  
when nerveless from weeping.

Now in some far-off land, mid rocks and desolate  
mountains —

Even on Sipylos, home of the nymphs who about  
Acheloös

Dance, as people report — she there, though stone,  
broodeth alway

Over her woes from the gods. So come, aged sire,  
and let us, too,

Think of our natural food; for again thou canst take  
up thy weeping

During the homeward return, and thy tears for thy  
son will be many."

This said, promptly Achilles was up and had slaugh-  
tered a fatling.

This his attendants skinned and prepared in orderly  
fashion,

Then, in pieces, they cut it with skill, and with spits  
they transfixed it,

Roasted it all to a turn, and again from the spits they  
withdrew it.

Bread, meanwhile, Automedon took and spread on  
the table,

Served in beautiful baskets; the meats Achilles  
divided.

Then they stretched forth their hands to the good  
cheer lying before them;

But, when their hunger and thirst were allayed,  
Dardanian Priam

Gazed at Achilles with wonder, his size and goodly  
proportions,

Yea, for he looked like a god; and Achilles wondered  
at Priam,

Noting his presence, how kingly it was, and hearing  
his sayings.

When they had had their fill of gazing the one at  
the other,

First of the twain to speak was the old man, glorious  
Priam,

Saying, "Dismiss me, Prince, to sleep as quickly as  
may be,

So that we both may depart and enjoy the com-  
fort of slumber.

Never beneath their lids have my eyes closed, no, not  
a moment,

After that under thy hands my son was slain, but  
forever

Passed my time in lament, and in nursing my manifold sorrows.

Now, at last, have I taken of bread, and moistened my palate

Drinking of bright-eyed wine, but before that nothing have tasted."

Thus he said; and Achilles his maid-servants bade, and his comrades,

Couches spread in the roofed colonnade, and beautiful cushions

Cast upon them of purple, and coverlets spread just above them,

Also, to cover the guests, to place over all woolly mantles.

Forth at his bidding they went from the hall with torches, and straightway

Spread two couches in haste; and bitterly thus said Achilles: —

"Sleep thou without, dear sire, lest one of the Danaan council

Come here, for often they come to consult, as is proper; and haply

Such an one saw thee to-night, he would straightway tell Agamemnon,

Causing delay if not worse respecting release of the body.

Come, now, and tell me this, — tell the truth without  
hesitation, —

How many days thou desirest for funeral honors to  
Hector,

So I may keep me from battle that long, and hinder  
the army.”

Then for rejoinder responded the time-worn veteran,  
Priam: —

“If, indeed, thou art willing I make due funeral for  
Hector,

Doing as thou hast foreshadowed would be most  
gracious, Achilles.

How we are hemmed in the city thou knowest, and  
far are the forests:

Wood must be brought from the mountains, and sore  
afraid are the Trojans.

Nine days' time in the halls we would wish for  
lament over Hector,

Then, on the tenth, we would burn him, and due  
feast give to the people,

Raise his tomb the eleventh, the twelfth do battle if  
need be.”

Then, once more, for rejoinder replied swift-footed  
Achilles: —

“So, be ye sure, shall it be, dear sire, even all thou  
hast asked me.



I will restrain the war the whole time thou hast demanded."

Thus having spoken he clasped by the wrist the  
right hand of Priam  
Lest he should fear in his heart; and there in the  
vestibule lay they,  
Even the herald and Priam, with heavy hearts; but  
Achilles  
Slept in a nook of the camp with fair-cheeked Briseis  
beside him.

Now, all the rest of the gods and earth-born chariot-  
fighters,  
Slumbered the whole night long, for sleep, all-com-  
forter, thrall'd them,  
All save Hermes the Helper whom slumber forsook,  
as he pondered  
How best Priam could scape from the camp un-  
espied by the watchmen.  
Over his head as he slept bent Hermes, and spake  
to him, saying:—

"No thought of fear hast thou, old man, that still  
thou art sleeping  
Here amid hostile men, because thou wert spared by  
Achilles!  
Now, already, thy son thou hast ransomed, and  
much hast thou given;

Yet, since thou art alive, full thrice as much ransom  
thy children,  
Those that are left thee, would give, if King  
Agamemnon Atreides  
Knew thou wert here in his power, and the other  
Achaians should know it."

Thus he spake, and the old man feared and awakened  
the herald.  
For them Argicide Hermes then yoked the mules  
and the horses,  
And, through the host, soon drave them himself,  
and not a man saw them.

Now, when they finally came to the fair-flowing  
streams of the Xanthos,  
Hermes straightway departed to lofty Olympos;  
and Morning  
Robed in her mantle of saffron was flooding the earth  
with her glory,  
While, to the city, with sorrow and sobbings, the  
herald and Priam  
Drave, and the mules brought the dead; and, of men  
and fair-girdled women,  
None descried them so soon as Kassandra, whose  
singular beauty  
Matched Aphrodîtè the golden; for she, high Per-  
gamos climbing,

Saw in the chariot standing her father, and with him  
the herald,

Also, Hector she saw on his bier in the mule-wagon  
lying.

Straightway she called with a piercing shriek that  
was heard through the city:—

“Men and women of Troy, go forth, and ye shall  
see Hector

Surely as once ye rejoiced to meet him returning  
from battle

Living, for joy was he then to the city and all of its  
people.”

Thus she called, nor behind in the city did any man  
linger,

No, nor a woman; for all were thrilled with grief  
overpowering:

Forth from the gates they pressed till they met the  
wain with the body,

Led by the loving wife and queenly mother who  
wept him,

Tearing their hair, and forward they flew to the  
wagon, and fondly

Clasped the head of the dead; and the throng stood  
round them lamenting.

Thus, then, the whole day long till the sun had gone  
to his setting

There in front of the gates had they stood lamenting  
for Hector,  
Saving that Priam called down from the car, and  
said to the people: —

“Stand ye apart, make room for the mules to pass,  
and hereafter  
Mourn to your heart's desire when home I have taken  
the body.”

Thus he spake; and the people dividing made way  
for the wagon.

When to his well-known home the body was borne,  
they Hector

Laid in state on a gorgeous couch, set singers beside  
him —

Men who could lead in the dirge — and they a  
funereal death-song

Chanted in solemn tone mid the wailings and sob-  
bings of women.

White-armed Andromachè mid them began her sad  
lamentation,

Holding the head in her hands of Hector, slayer of  
heroes: —

“Husband, from life thou hast gone in thy youth,  
and a desolate widow

Leavest me in the halls, and our boy is merely an  
infant,

Born of a hapless pair, of me and of thee, and will  
never  
Grow, I fear me, to manhood; for long ere that will  
the city  
Fall from its high estate; for thou, its warder, hast  
perished,  
Thou its defender, who keptest in safety its wives  
and its children.  
These in the hollow ships will soon be departing as  
captives,  
Yea, and I shall be with them; and thou, too, wilt  
follow, my baby,  
There to toil at unseemly tasks at the beck of a  
master  
Brutal and churlish, or else some Achaian will seize  
thee and hurl thee  
Down from the tower, a terrible death, in revenge  
for that Hector  
Haply a brother hath slain, or father, or son, for full  
many  
Under the hands of Hector have bit the dust in their  
death-throes.  
Nowise pleasant to meet was thy sire in the tumult  
of battle,  
And, for that reason, the people are mourning him  
all through the city;  
Aye, and unspeakable mourning and grief hast thou  
left to thy parents,



Hector, but I most of all shall be left in comfortless  
sorrow,  
Seeing thy hands thou stretched not to me from thy  
death-bed at parting,  
Neither a comforting word didst thou speak which I  
might remember  
Always, and mid my woe might ponder daytime  
and nighttime."

Thus she spake in her tears, and in sobs the women  
responded..  
Hekabè, mid them, was next to lead in the loud  
lamentation: —

"Hector, dearest to me by far of all of my children,  
Verily, during thy lifetime thou ever wast loved by  
immortals,  
So they have cared for thee now, albeit death is thy  
portion.  
Other children of mine whom he captured, swift-  
foot Achilles  
Sold beyond the verdureless sea, to Samos, and  
Imbros,  
Even to smoking Lemnos, but thee, when thy life  
he had ravished,  
Many a time he dragged round the tomb of his  
comrade, Patroklos —  
Him whom thou slewest — but up from the dead did  
not raise him for all that.

Now thou liest in death as fresh as the dew, like a  
mortal  
Smitten by kindly shafts from the silver bow of  
Apollo.”

Thus she spake in lament, and the moanings she  
waked were unending.  
Then, for the third, spake Helen in lead of the loud  
lamentation: —

“Hector, of brethren here far dearest of all unto  
Helen,  
Lo, it is twenty years since I left the land of my  
fathers,  
Brought to an alien shore by Paris; would I had died  
first!  
Yet during all those terrible years I have heard from  
thee never  
Word of reproach, not one; and if any one else in the  
palace  
Taunted me, either a brother, or sister, or wife of a  
brother,  
Even the queen, — King Priam was always to me  
like a father, —  
Such an one thou wouldst appease, and check with  
kind admonition,  
Won by a spirit thine own of tenderness tenderly  
spoken.

Therefore I weep, and with aching heart, for thee  
and my hapless  
Self, for no other is left me in all Troy's mighty  
dominions  
Kindly disposed and a friend, but all shrink away  
with a shudder."

Thus she spake in her tears, mid the wails of the  
multitude countless.  
Then spake Priam, their aged king, and said to the  
men-folk: —

"Now, ye Trojans, bring wood to the city; nor fear  
ye an ambush  
Craftily laid by the foe; for Achilles this of a surety  
Promised, when sending me home from the hostile  
camp of the Argives,  
That, till the morn of the twelfth day dawned, they  
would nowise assail us."

Thus he said; and their oxen and mules they yoked  
to the wagons,  
And, in a twinkling thereafter, were gathered in  
front of the city.  
Then they for nine days' time brought firewood in  
in abundance;  
But, on the tenth, in the light of the dawn which  
shineth for mortals,

Men, with many a tear, brave Hector bore from the  
city,  
Placed the dead on the funeral pile, and started it  
burning.

Straightway at peep of the next day's dawn, in the  
flush of the morning,  
Sadly about the pyre of glorious Hector the people  
Gathered, and sparkling wine poured on till the pile  
stopped blazing.  
Then his brethren and comrades the white bones  
gathered together,  
Tears streaming over their faces, and, wrapped in  
vesture of purple,  
Placed in an urn of gold; and then in a grave they  
had hollowed  
Buried the urn, and huge gray stones piled thickly  
upon it.  
Quickly they heaped up a mound, and about them  
watchmen were stationed,  
Fearing before the time an attack from the mail-clad  
Achaians.  
Straightway the tomb was raised they returned once  
more, and, collecting,  
Met at a lordly feast in the royal palace of Priam.  
Ended thus were the rites of Hector, tamer of horses.

END OF THE ILIAD





ZEUS, HERA, AND POSEIDON



## ZEUS, HERA, AND POSEIDON

An Episode in the Iliad omitted from this  
Abridgment.

Zeus, when he has inspired the Trojans to carry the Achaian Wall, as related in Book XII, allows his attention to wander, and Poseidon perceiving this enters the Achaian army disguised as a man and renders the defence efficient assistance.

### BOOK XIII (Lines 10-80)

No blind watch kept the Shaker-of-earth, immortal  
Poseidon.

High on the loftiest peak of Samos-in-Thrace he  
was sitting

Rapt in watching the battle, for thence in entirety  
Ida,

Thence the city of Priam was seen, and the Argive  
encampment.

There he had gone from the depths of the sea, and  
yearned for the Argives

All overborne by Troy, and at Zeus was bitterly  
angered.

Straightway down from the mount by rugged path  
    he descended,  
Striding with mighty strides, and the lofty hills and  
    the woodlands  
Trembled under his feet at the tread of immortal  
    Poseidon.

Three were his steps, then a fourth, and was come to  
    the end of his journey,  
Aigai, for there was his glorious house in the deeps of  
    the harbor,  
Gleaming and fashioned of gold, forever and ever  
    abiding.

Straightway unto his car the great god harnessed his  
    horses,  
Bronze-footed, swift as the birds, with manes wide-  
    flowing and golden,  
Girded himself in his armor of gold, and seizing the  
    well-made  
Reins wrought also of gold, he straightway mount-  
    ing his chariot  
Drave the steeds o'er the waves; and sea-creatures,  
    knowing their master,  
Swarmed from their places of hiding apace, and  
    frolicked about him;  
Wide apart in their joy stood the waves of the sea,  
    and the horses

Sped on their way, and the axle of bronze kept dry  
notwithstanding.

So, the high-bounding steeds bore their lord to the  
camp of the Argives.

Now, in the deeps, down under the sea, is a very  
broad cavern

Lying 'twixt Tenedos isle and the rugged island of  
Imbros.

There the lord of the earthquake, Poseidon, halted  
his horses,

Set them free of the car and, to feed them, ambrosial  
fodder

Placed at their heads; then shackles of gold bound  
under their fetlocks

Not to be broken nor loosed, intending the horses  
should stay there

Waiting their master's return; then he sought the  
embattled Achaians.

Closely arrayed, like a flame or a storm-wind, on  
came the Trojans

Stedfastly following Hector, and roaring and yelling  
in chorus,

Thinking to capture the Danaan camp, and slay its  
defenders.

Straightway Poseidon, now come from the sea, ex-  
horted the Argives,



Taking the form and unwearying voice of Kalchas  
the prophet.

First he spake to the Aiases twain, who needed no  
urging: —

“Aiases both, it is yours to save the Danaan army  
So ye remember your might and disdain dishearten-  
ing panic.

Fear have I none of this Trojan array swarming over  
our ramparts —

They will be held in check by the mail-clad Achaians;  
disaster

Only I dread from their leader, this madman who  
rageth like fire,

Hector, who boasteth himself to be son of Zeus the  
transcendent.

Granting some one of the gods should inspire the  
spirit in you twain

Both to fight to the utmost yourselves and encourage  
the others,

Then might you drive from the ships this Hector, his  
dash notwithstanding,

Yea, though the power of Zeus, the Olympian lord,  
be behind him.”

Thus spake the Shaker-of-earth, and touching the  
twain with his sceptre

Filled them with spirit for fight, and their limbs  
forgot they were weary.

He himself like a swift-winged hawk when it starteth  
its flying,  
Which, from its haunt on a lofty rock that goat never  
clambered,  
Suddenly darteth to earth to snatch some bird for  
its supper,  
Even so quick from the twain sped away earth-  
shaking Poseidon.  
First to perceive was the quick-witted Aias the son of  
Oileus,  
And, to the other he spake, the great Telamonian  
Aias: —

“Aias, this being was one of the gods who dwell in  
Olympos,  
Speaking in guise of our seer, who urged us to fight  
for the shipping.  
This was no Kalchas, our prophet and augur, for  
when he departed  
I from behind saw his feet and his knees, and marked  
that they moved not.  
Easy are gods to distinguish, and lo, the heart in  
my bosom,  
Yea, and my feet and my hands for the fray have  
longing unwonted.”

Then in response to his namesake spake great Tela-  
monian Aias: —

“Just so also in my case the hands are wild for the  
spear-shaft,  
Aye, and my courage is high, and my feet are hasting  
beneath me.  
Hector now flushed with success I could meet alone,  
and should flinch not.”

Poseidon, in the guise of Kalchas, now addresses the army  
generally.

BOOK XIII (Lines 95–154)

“Shame, ye Argives, ye vigorous youths! in you have  
I trusted,  
Knowing your strength in fight, to keep our shipping  
in safety.  
Hark ye, if men like you are slack in desperate  
conflict,  
Dawned right now is the day that will witness your  
final destruction.  
'Sdeath! an unwelcome surprise mine eyes are  
beholding, and direful, —  
What, for one, I never had dreamed as a possible  
danger, —  
Trojans assailing our ships, the Trojans who always  
before this  
Seemed like the timorous deer, whose life is a flight  
in the greenwood

Seemingly made to be eaten by wolves and jackals  
and panthers,

Wandering helpless, defenceless, no drop of fighting-  
blood in them:

So the Trojans, aforetime, the might and hands of the  
Argives

Never would face in a hand-to-hand fight, no, not  
for a moment.

Now, far, far from the city, they fight at our ships  
and encampment

Owing to fault of our leader, and slackness, in turn,  
of the army,

Who, in their anger at him, neglect to fight for the  
shipping.

As to the act of Atreides, our masterful king, Aga-  
memnon,

E'en though we grant he was wholly to blame for  
insulting Achilles,

That does not justify us in being remiss in our  
duty.

Up, now! be wise in time; for wise are the minds of  
the valiant.

Just excuse have ye none for abating your spirit and  
valor,

You, who are flower of the army. At one unequal  
to warfare

I'm not the man to rail, but at you I am thoroughly  
angry.

Comrades, the more your remissness the sooner and  
greater the evil!

Think of your own self-respect and the just indignation of others!

Hard is the conflict before you, for Hector good at  
the war-cry

Fights in his might by your ships, and your gates  
hath he broken in sunder."

Such was Poseidon's appeal, and its urgency roused  
the Achaians.

Straightway they stood by the Aiases twain in  
powerful phalanx

Such as Ares, if with them, would scorn not, no, nor  
Athena:

Nay, as the Trojans and Hector came on they gallantly  
faced them,

Spear interlacing with spear, and shield on shield  
overlapping,

Targe close crowding on targe, helm helm, and hero  
on hero:

Horse-hair plumes on the glittering crests atop of  
the helmets

Hit as they nodded, so serried the ranks, so close they  
were standing;

Ponderous spear-shafts were bending as swayed in  
the hands of the mighty,

Eyes were turned to the front, and hearts beat panting  
for battle.



Forward in close array pressed the Trojans — Hector  
was leading

Meaning to charge straight through: but as head-  
strong boulder a-rolling, —

Swept from the steep it hath haughtily crowned by  
a turbulent river

Swollen by wintry rains which have eaten away  
its foundations, —

Bounding it flieth on high, beneath it thunders the  
forest,

On, still on, it poundeth its way till it reacheth a  
level —

Then it rolleth no more, its will notwithstanding; so  
Hector

Threatened to charge through the Danaan camp  
till he came to the sea-shore

Smiting with edge of the sword; but when he en-  
countered the phalanx,

There he was stayed though he pressed on hard —  
the embattled Achaians

Met him with sword-point and spear-point, and  
forced him back in his onset.

Then with a shout that resounded afar he called to  
the Trojans: —

“Trojans and Lykians, children of Dardanos, hand-  
to-hand fighters,

Hold your advantage! not long will the Danaans  
stop me, albeit

Massed like a tower, but methinks my spear will  
disperse them, for surely  
Hera's high-thundering lord, war's arbiter, biddeth  
me forward."

BOOK XIII (Lines 345-383)

Thus the two mighty sons of Kronos crooked-in-  
counsel  
Through their opposing wills wrought woes for both  
the contestants.  
Zeus, on the one hand, was willing success for the  
Trojans and Hector,  
Meaning to honor Achilles, the haughty of heart;  
but he nowise  
Meant that the Danaan host should utterly perish  
in Troy-land,  
Nay, but only to pamper the pride of Achilles and  
Thetis.  
Pitted against him Poseidon had come to strengthen  
the Argives,  
Secretly stealing to earth from the surging sea; for  
he brooked not  
Seeing them suffer defeat, and was bitterly wroth  
at his brother.  
Parents and country the same, the brethren were  
equal except that

Zeus was the elder born, and he knew more things;  
so Poseidon  
Shunned to give open aid, but, throughout the host  
of the Argives  
Ever, but wearing disguise of a man, kept bidding  
them forward.  
Thus of impartial war and desperate battle the  
brethren  
Knotted the cords, and strained them alike for  
Achaian and Trojan,  
Not to be broken nor loosed, but the knees they  
loosened for many.

Hera now takes part in the drama, and schemes to distract  
the attention of Zeus while Poseidon is rallying the  
Achaians.

#### BOOK XIV (Lines 158-362)

High-throned Hera the while was standing atop of  
Olympos  
Watching. Poseidon her brother she knew, dis-  
guise notwithstanding,  
Urging the Argives to glorious fight, and her soul  
was delighted.  
Then, as she turned her gaze to Ida, mother of rivers,  
There on the summit was Zeus, and her soul waxed  
bitter with hatred.

How to distract the attention of Zeus, that he see not  
    Poseidon,  
Sorely perplexed the wits of the ox-eyed queen, and  
    she pondered  
Scheme after scheme for deluding her lord; and this  
    seemed the shrewdest, —  
Decking herself in her best to repair to Ida, if haply  
Zeus might be fired with desire and yield to her ardent  
    embraces  
So to lull eyes and his vigilant mind in sleep un-  
    suspecting.  
Straight to the chamber she went which her son,  
    deft workman, Hephaistos  
Made for her, entered by bright-shining doors close  
    fitting the door-posts  
Shut by a secret bolt which no other immortal could  
    open, —  
Into this chamber she went and the bright doors  
    bolted behind her.  
Then with ambrosia first from off her beautiful  
    person  
Washed she every defilement, and next with oil of  
    the olive,  
Sweet and ambrosial, anointed herself, —'twas of  
    singular fragrance,  
Such that if once it were shaken in Zeus's brazen-  
    floored dwelling  
All over earth and heaven was diffused the volatile  
    perfume.

After her beautiful skin with this was anointed,  
her tresses  
Next she combed and plaited in braids that shone  
like a halo, —  
Lovely ambrosial locks befitting a goddess im-  
mortal.  
Then about her she wrapped her ambrosial robe  
which Athena  
Tastefully wrought, and upon it had placed much  
needlework cunning, —  
Tying it over her bosom with buckles goodly and  
golden;  
Then her girdle put on bedecked with tassels an  
hundred,  
Ear-rings, also, with pendants three, — all very  
becoming.  
Then, her head with a veil this goddess of goddesses  
covered,  
Beautiful, newly made, and white it was as the sun-  
light;  
Under her delicate feet she last bound beautiful  
sandals.  
Finally, now that her body was decked with all her  
adornments,  
Forth from her chamber she sallied and, calling to  
bright Aphrodîtè,  
Led her apart from the rest of the gods, and spake  
to her, saying: —



“Prythee, wilt grant me the boon, dear child, I am  
going to ask thee,  
Or, from our discord refuse me, thy heart at this  
being hostile,  
Seeing the Danaans I, and thou the Trojans defend-  
est?”

Then for rejoinder responded the daughter of Zeus,  
Aphrodítè: —

“Hera, queen of the gods, and daughter of Kronos  
the mighty,  
Tell me the boon in thy mind; my heart impels me  
to grant it,  
If I am able to do it, that is, nor accomplishment  
hopeless.”

Then, in the craft of her heart, responded imperial  
Hera: —

“Loan me, just for the time, desire and love where-  
withal thou  
Holdest all in thy thrall, both gods undying and  
mortals.

I am going, my dear, to the limits of earth on a visit,  
Even to Ocean, the sire of the gods, and Tethys  
their mother, —

Them who bred me as one of their house, and royally  
reared me,

Having received me from Rhea when Zeus, dread  
Arbiter, prisoned  
Kronos in regions below green earth and the verdure-  
less billows.  
Them I am going to see, and would end their quarrels  
unceasing, —  
Seeing this long, long time they are living apart from  
each other  
Both as to bed and embraces of love, so deep is their  
hatred.  
If, by my words, this pair I could win to complete  
reconcilement  
So as to bring them anew to their old-time bed and  
endearment,  
Then I the title should win of a dear friend, loved  
and respected.”

Then, with a merry laugh, responded blithe Aphro-  
dité: —  
“Hera, I cannot refuse thee thy word, nor would it  
be seemly, —  
Thee who sleepest with Zeus, and his royal embraces  
enfold thee.”

E'en as she spake from her waist she unbound her  
girdle embroidered,  
Wrought in many a hue, and in it were all her en-  
chantments:

In it inwrought were love, and longing, and in it  
allurement

Tender, which even have power to steal their wits  
from the wisest.

This she tossed to the hands of her queen with the  
cheerful assurance: —

“Here is my girdle; take it, and lay it away in thy  
bosom,

Broidered in many a hue, and with all my charms;  
and I tell thee

Nowise fruitless the journey will be which thou art  
designing.”

Thus spake sweet Aphrodîtè, and ox-eyed imperial  
Hera

Smiled, but suppressing the smile, she hid the gift  
in her bosom.

Parting, away to her house went the daughter of  
Zeus, Aphrodîtè.

Hera with hurrying feet went straight from the peak  
of Olympos,

First on Pieria stepping, and next on Emathia lovely,  
Then to the snow-clad hills of the horse-breeding  
Thracians she hastened —

Loftiest mountains of earth — yet earth touched  
not with her footsteps.

Leaving Mount Athos she sped on the dark sea's  
billowy pathway

On to the island of Lemnos, the city of Thoas the  
godlike.

Sleep, twin brother of death, she met — it was he  
she was seeking —

Clasped his hand in her own, and said in winsome  
entreaty: —

“Sleep, thou master of all, not men alone but im-  
mortals,

E'en as of yore my word thou hast heeded, so once  
again, pray,

Do as I bid thee, and gratitude for it thou winnest  
forever.

Seal King Zeus's vigilant eyes in slumber unruffled  
Straightway in loving embrace thou seest me lying  
beside him.

Gifts will I give thee, a beautiful arm-chair, forever  
abiding,

Golden; Hephaistos shall make it, my artisan son  
who is crippled,

Make it with wondrous care, and set thereunder a  
foot-rest.”

Then for rejoinder responded the god of slumber  
resistless: —

“Hera, queen of the gods, thou daughter of Kronos  
the mighty,  
Anyone else of the gods might I readily level in  
slumber,  
Even the Ocean Stream, the ancient sire of the  
living:  
Zeus Kronion — not I would venture into his  
presence  
Much less put him to sleep when he hath not in  
person enjoined it.  
Lo, I obeyed thee once on a time, and it taught me  
a lesson —  
I refer to the day when high-hearted Herakles, Zeus’s  
Son, from Ilios sailed, after taking the Phrygian  
city —  
I did the lulling to sleep of the wits of the lord of the  
aegis,  
Softly twining about him; but thou, imagining mis-  
chief,  
Sent on the sea tempestuous winds, a mighty tornado,  
Driving his vessels to Kos, a populous city of stran-  
gers, —  
Friend not one was anigh him; and Zeus was wroth  
when he awakened,  
Hurled the gods round the palace, but picked me  
out for a scapegoat.  
Then had I never been heard of again, for he threat-  
ened to cast me



---

Into the sea from the ether, but Night, all-powerful,  
saved me.

Unto that goddess I fled, and Zeus, his wrath notwithstanding,

Ceased his pursuit, for he shrank to offend night's  
shadowy mistress.

Now thou bid'st me unlearn all that bitter experience taught me."

Promptly responded the ox-eyed queen, his imperial  
mistress: —

"Sleep, let bygones be bygones! Dismiss these vain  
apprehensions.

Say, dost thou really think Zeus careth enough for the  
Trojans

So that his wrath would be kindled as when his son  
was in danger?

Grant me my prayer, and one of the Graces in flower  
of her girlhood

I will give thee to wed, and thy wedded wife be her  
title."

Thus she spake, and Sleep was delighted, and answered her, saying: —

"Quick, now, swear me an oath by the baleful  
Stygian river,

One hand placing on earth, on the sea bright-gleaming  
the other,

So that the gods in the darkness below where Kronos  
is banished  
All may be witnesses for us, without reservation to  
give me  
Her I have longed for so long, Pasithea, bud of the  
Graces."

Thus he spake, and Hera, the white-armed goddess,  
complying  
Swore to all he had bidden, and named by name the  
immortals,  
All who dwell under Tartaros' deeps, and are known  
as the Titans.  
Now when Hera was sworn and the oath was finished  
completely,  
Off went the twain, and Lemnos they left and the  
city of Imbros —  
Hidden from view by mist — and soon had accom-  
plished their journey.  
So, to Ida they came, the mother of beasts and of  
rivers,  
Even to Lektos where, leaving the sea, they over the  
mainland  
Hurried amain, and the tree-tops high swayed under  
their footsteps.  
Sleep there waited apart that the eye of Zeus might  
not see him,

Climbing a monstrous pine, the tallest growing on  
Ida,  
Where, by the pine-boughs hid, he perched like the  
bird of the mountains  
Known by the vibrant notes it rolleth and shaketh  
at nightfall,  
“Night-jar” called by the gods, but by men best  
known as the “night-hawk.”

Hera the while had arrived at the Gargaros-summit  
of Ida.  
Zeus who ruleth the storm-cloud beheld, and, soon  
as he saw her,  
Love swept over his heart as when first they joyed  
in each other  
Flitting together to bed, and their parents never  
suspecting.  
Up he stood at her coming, and spake her name, with  
the query: —

“Hera, what was the errand that sendeth thee here  
from Olympos?  
I do not see any horses or chariot either to bear thee.”

Then, with guile in her heart, imperial Hera  
responded: —  
“Oh, I am started to visit the broad earth’s utter-  
most limits,

Even to Ocean, the sire of the gods, and Tethys their  
    mother,  
Them who received me as child of their own, and  
    royally bred me.  
Them I am going to visit, and end their unnatural  
    quarrels,  
Seeing already a long, long time they abstain from  
    each other,  
Both as to bed and embraces of love, so deep is their  
    hatred.  
As to my horses, I left them behind at the foot of  
    Mt. Ida,  
Standing all ready to carry me there over land, over  
    water.  
Hither I come from Olympos for thy sake, no other  
    reason,  
Lest, when the deed was done, thou mightest be  
    wroth if I rashly  
Went, without saying a word, to the dwelling of  
    eddyng Ocean."

Then for rejoinder responded great Zeus who darken-  
    eth heaven: —  
"Hera, that journey can wait. Let us turn at once  
    to the love bed.  
Never before hath such passion as this for goddess  
    or woman

Either, so flooded my heart and conquered the soul  
in my bosom

As, at this moment, my love is for thee, and importunate longing.”

Then, with craft in her heart, responded imperial  
Hera: —

“Son of Kronos, thou awful! How indiscreet thy  
proposal!

Why, if I grant thy desires right here on the summit  
of Ida,

Here where all is in sight, what if one of the ever-  
existing

Gods should catch us lain down, and tell it around to  
the others!

I’m not the one who could ever go back to the tattle  
of heaven,

Rising from such a couch — it would be reprehensible, very.

Nay, if thou really desirest this thing, and thy heart  
is determined,

There is thy chamber with close-fitting doors, the  
work of Hephaistos: —

There let us go to our regular bed, since desire hath  
possessed thee.”

Then for rejoinder responded great Zeus who ruleth  
in cloudland: —

“Hera, banish thy fears that god or mortal may see  
us, —



Such a cloud will I cover us with, ineffable, golden!  
Through it not even the Sun can espy, whose sight is  
the keenest."

Even while speaking thus the son of Kronos the  
mighty  
Clasped his wife in his arms; and earth divine under-  
neath them  
Put forth fresh-growing grass, and lotus dewy, and  
crocus,  
Aye, and hyacinths many and soft, — a couch of  
the greensward.  
There mid the flowers they lay; and a vesture of  
cloud overspread them,  
Beautiful, golden, resplendent, and dripping with  
sparkling dew-drops.

Thus in a dreamless sleep slept Zeus on the Gargaros-  
summit,  
Holding his wife in his arms, by love overcome and  
by slumber.  
Then, away to the Danaan ships, on the run and  
triumphant,  
Sped sweet Sleep with a message to tell earth-  
shaking Poseidon.  
Nigh Poseidon he halted and breathlessly spake to  
him, saying: —

“Fearlessly, now, O Poseidon, pursue thy defence  
of the Argives!  
Let them with victory march for the moment at  
least, while on Ida  
Zeus still sleepeth, for I have o’erspread him with  
comforting slumber,  
Senseless, for Hera to dalliance sweet by craft hath  
beguiled him.”

Thus he spake, then wended his way to races of  
mortals,  
Leaving Poseidon still further inspired for defence of  
the Argives.

#### BOOK XV (Lines 168–219)

Zeus soon wakens and sends Iris to warn Poseidon from the  
field.

Thus spake Zeus and, not disobeying, wind-footed  
Iris  
Sped from the mountains of Ida down, down to Ilios  
sacred.  
Swiftly as when from a cloud flyeth snowflake  
frozen or hailstone  
Swept by a wintry blast of Boreas born of the ether,  
Even so fast on her mission sped heaven’s swift  
messenger, Iris.

Reaching the far-famed Shaker-of-earth she spake  
to him, saying: —

“Message I bring thee, Poseidon, from Zeus who  
wieldeth the aegis:

Go, saith Zeus, from the battle; go, quit the field  
altogether,

Making thy way to the court of the gods, or the sea,  
thy dominion.

If, regarding him not, thou meetest his word with  
refusal,

Then Zeus saith he will come here in person and  
face thee in conflict.

Strongly he urgeth submission, and warns thee to  
shun such encounter,

Saying that he is far greater in might, and in birth  
was the elder,

Yet in the pride of thine heart thou heedest him not,  
but assumest

Thou art the peer of thy king, the dread of the other  
immortals.”

Then, in a towering rage, responded the lord of the  
earthquake: —

“ ’Sdeath! No doubt he is great, but this is an  
insolent message,

Threatening me with force, albeit his equal in honor!  
Brethren three were we, the sons of Kronos and Rhea,

Zeus and I, and Hades was third, the king of the dead folk.

Threefold division we made, and each came in for a kingdom:

I, on the casting of lots, had the surging sea for my portion,

Mine to dwell in forever, and Hades the westering darkness;

Zeus, for his share, the wide, wide heaven in the clouds and the ether,

Leaving Olympos and earth still common to all the immortals.

Therefore I nowise will walk at the bidding of Zeus; unmolested

Let him remain content with his third, his might notwithstanding.

Let him not try by his threats to terrify me as a weakling;

Daughters he hath and sons whom himself hath begotten; 'twere better

Visit on them his opprobrious words — they will hear from compulsion."

Then for rejoinder responded the messenger, wind-footed Iris: —

"Wilt thou on second thought, thou land-locking, dark-haired Poseidon,

Send me back with answer to Zeus so froward and  
surly,  
Or, by a bit, reconsider? and wise minds do recon-  
sider.  
Knowest thou not the Avengers support the power  
of the elder? ”

Then for rejoinder responded Poseidon, lord of the  
earthquake: —  
“Iris, fate is no truer than this the word thou hast  
spoken!  
Yea, ’tis an excellent thing when a messenger knoweth  
discretion!  
Sorely my heart is pained to think of his insolent  
bidding  
Spoken to me, his peer, and entitled to equal observ-  
ance,  
Yet for the time I yield to his claims, though just my  
resentment.  
One thing more will I say, and not only threaten but  
mean it:  
If, without my consent and that of Athena the  
raider,  
Also of Hera and Hermes and craftsman Hephaistos,  
he spareth  
High-walled Ilios, neither permitteth its utter  
destruction,



This let him know, we five shall be unappeasably  
angry.”

Thus spake the Shaker-of-earth and, leaving the  
host of Achaians,  
Went and plunged in the sea, and sadly the Dan-  
aans missed him.





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